

# Table of Contents

Chapter	Title	Page
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Overall Assessment	5
Chapter 3	Service Priorities	12
Chapter 4	Concerns about Crime	18
Chapter 5	Division of Police Services	26
Chapter 6	Division of Fire Services	32
Chapter 7	Division of Park Services	36
Chapter 8	Other Agencies:  Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, Public Library and Information Center, Riverfront Development Corporation, and MLGW	48
Chapter 9	Neighborhood Concerns	61
Chapter 10	Division of Housing and Community Development:  Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods, Mayor's Citizen Service Center, Division of General Services, and Office of Planning and Development	67
Chapter 11	Division of Public Works	78
Chapter 12	Communication with Citizens	90
Chapter 13	Comparison of Services	102
Chapter 14	Traffic Engineering and Enforcement	113
Chapter 15	Technical Issues	116

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Herenton Administration is pleased to sponsor the fourteenth Memphis Poll. The first Memphis Poll was produced in 1993 and proved to be useful to both the Herenton Administration and the Memphis community. Mayor W.W. Herenton conceived and continues to support the Memphis Poll. The City of Memphis Division of Finance coordinates the Poll.

A separate *Executive Summary* has been prepared, which describes the major findings of the 2007 Memphis Poll in an abbreviated format. The full report, questionnaire, and the executive summary are available at the City of Memphis website: [www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov).

### **Purpose of the Memphis Poll**

The purpose of the 2007 Memphis Poll is to provide a procedure by which citizens' views can become part of the planning and budgeting process. The City views citizens as customers and its services as products. Like any successful business, the City is making a concerted effort to learn how satisfied citizens are with its services.

The Poll results help the administration set priorities and evaluate the quality of its services. This report and similar studies conducted in other cities suggest that citizens can effectively describe the quality of their City services. Citizens have the unique ability to define the services that they consider most important, which may or may not differ from the concerns of political leaders and administrators.

The Poll provides data for the current budget process and influences long-range City policies. The polling manager used scientific techniques and had an independent company collect the data. The analysis was conducted independently of both the company collecting the data and City of Memphis officials.

City officials offered editorial suggestions that made the writing of the Poll much stronger. This involvement of City officials is an important part of the process since it leads to their greater use of the polling information.

Since the Memphis Poll has fourteen years of comparative data, the 2007 Poll includes extensive trend data for services and policies. The trend data are a “policy treasure” in that they show how services are perceived over an extended period. There are few cities that can claim a data set of this quality and magnitude. The Poll has been an annual event since 1993, except for 2006. The 2006 Memphis Poll was cancelled for budgetary reasons.

The text below refers to the 2007 Memphis Poll, unless it specifically mentions the earlier Polls. The data are reported both in text and graphics that can be interpreted by the lay reader. Many of the trend charts compare the findings of all fourteen Polls from 1993 to 2007.

## **Polling Method**

The Memphis Poll employed scientific polling procedures, including random digit dialing, to select the respondents. The polling process produced 915 respondents. The actual interviewing took place in late November 2006 and the report was issued for use in the FY 2008 budget process. The preliminary results were provided to the Division of Finance in January 2007 and PowerPoint presentations were made to both the division directors and individual divisions. The Executive Summary was provided in February 2007 and this report was made available in April 2007.

The 2007 Memphis Poll replicated procedures from the earlier Memphis Polls. The random sampling procedures resulted in a group of citizens similar to earlier Polls.<sup>1</sup>

The Poll results provide information on citizens’ assessments of a variety of programs and policies. The major categories of questions included actual services, policies, and concerns. The Poll asked tangible questions about City services.

The reader should not confuse the Memphis Poll with other polls reporting on similar topics. The Memphis Poll deals only with the perceptions of *Memphis*

---

<sup>1</sup> The Poll reflected the white and African American populations of the City. It also reflected the geography of the City. It did not reflect the Hispanic population. Hispanics are under-represented in both the Memphis Poll and the U.S. Census. They are a difficult population to poll. Some suggestions have been made to the City on conducting a special poll of the Hispanic community. The Memphis Poll suggests that the City should partner with nonprofits, County, and State governments in such an effort. As an example, see Mary Powers, “Hispanics hit health care’s speech barrier,” Memphis Commercial Appeal, February 7, 2004.

citizens. The Poll examines issues, services, and policies directly affected by the City government. It also presents some information by various geographic sections of the City (See Chapter 15 for a base map of the sections).

The Poll report provides information about the response rate of various questions. Respondents were asked to only provide answers when they were familiar with programs. Therefore, for some services, it was appropriate for response rates that hovered around 50 percent, while other services had response rates near 100 percent. Chapter 15 provides the response rates for each geographic section of the City.

The Poll results reported response differences between African American and white respondents that were 10 percentage points or greater.<sup>2</sup> For simplicity, percentage point differences in the report are called percent differences or percent change.

Dr. Michael Kirby prepared the poll questions, formatted the survey, and computerized the results.<sup>3</sup> He also wrote the final report.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Kirby used the appropriate procedures to bring objectivity and balance to the report.

## **Poll Summary**

The 2007 Memphis Poll asked citizens to respond to 148 different questions regarding various issues. The results are displayed in the 104 different charts, maps, and tables throughout this report.<sup>5</sup>

As with the previous Memphis Polls, the major conclusion of the 2007 Memphis Poll is that citizens feel positive about the City's services and its public policies. The overall approval rating for the City's services was 78 percent. This shows

---

<sup>2</sup> The response rates for race were: 96 percent of the citizens provided their race and 95 percent of the citizens were African American or white. When only the two groups were examined, 64 percent of the respondents were African American and 36 percent were white.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Kirby, a faculty member in Urban Studies and an Associate Professor of Political Science and the Plough Professor of Urban Studies at Rhodes College, has conducted many Memphis studies including the previous Memphis Polls. He has also served as a consultant on many national studies. Dr. Kirby specializes in the use of social science data for policy-making purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Numerous people worked on the Poll and their contributions were invaluable. Yacoubian Research assisted with questionnaire formation and performed the actual interviewing. Jan Kirby edited the full report and provided some analysis. Kristen Fitzpatrick was the senior editor for the report. Special thanks are due to James Stokes for coordinating the City efforts related to the Poll.

<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to provide more extensive information because the final report is already too long and complex.

that the majority of citizens believe that the City is providing good quality services.

There were an impressive number of services rated very highly by the citizens. These included the Division of Fire Services (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), Division of Fire Services' EMS program (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), Division of Park Services (Botanic Garden, Pink Palace Museum, and Zoo), the Division of Public Works (promptness in weekly solid waste pickup and recycling), the Public Library and Information Center (main library, helpfulness of staff, availability of materials, overall quality of branches, and availability of computers), Memphis Light, Gas and Water (drinking water and field workers), and Health Department (vital records).

Citizens' concerns about crime and unsafe neighborhoods were the highest in the history of the Memphis Poll. They were concerned about overall crime, burglaries, violent crime, drug sales, and gangs. These concerns were reflected throughout the City.

Citizens were concerned about physical conditions in their neighborhoods. They were most troubled about vacant lots and litter on streets.

Citizens also identified some services about which they were concerned. Memphis Light, Gas and Water's (MLGW) cost of utilities was the lowest-rated service in the entire 2007 Memphis Poll. They also thought the quality of programs administered by Division of Park Services had declined, and rated public swimming pools as the second lowest service in the City.

Citizens rated crime protection as the most important priority of the City. On the other hand, they gave very low priority to the large public development projects, such as the Liberty Bowl, Pyramid, riverfront development, and building roads—indicating a lower priority for these projects. They also gave low ratings to PILOTs, which are property tax breaks to businesses.

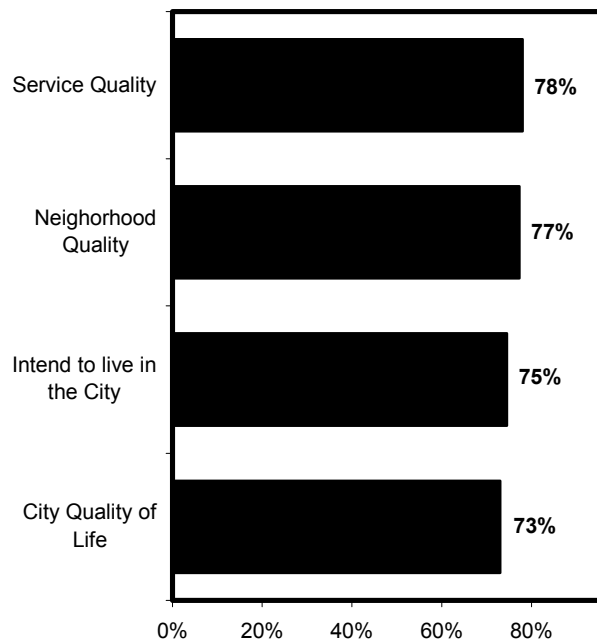
## Chapter 2

# Overall Assessment

### Overall Assessment

This analysis of the Memphis Poll begins by examining the overall citizens' assessment of the City and its services. Figure 2-1 provides four broad measures in the Memphis Poll that address the overall citizens' perceptions of the City and its government.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 2-1: Overall "Quality" Assessment by Citizens**



Service quality refers to the citizens' satisfaction with the delivery of City of Memphis public services. It is a measure of overall citizens' satisfaction with City services. Figure 2-1 shows that the citizens viewed service quality as positive with 78 percent of the citizens agreeing that the City did a good job of delivering services.

The Memphis Poll measured overall neighborhood quality. Specifically, the Poll asked citizens if they thought their neighborhoods would be a better place to live, about the same, or a worse place to live one year from now. Figure 2-1

---

<sup>6</sup> The response rates for these measures were: service quality (99 percent), neighborhood quality (97 percent), intend to live in the City (100 percent), and City quality of life (99 percent).

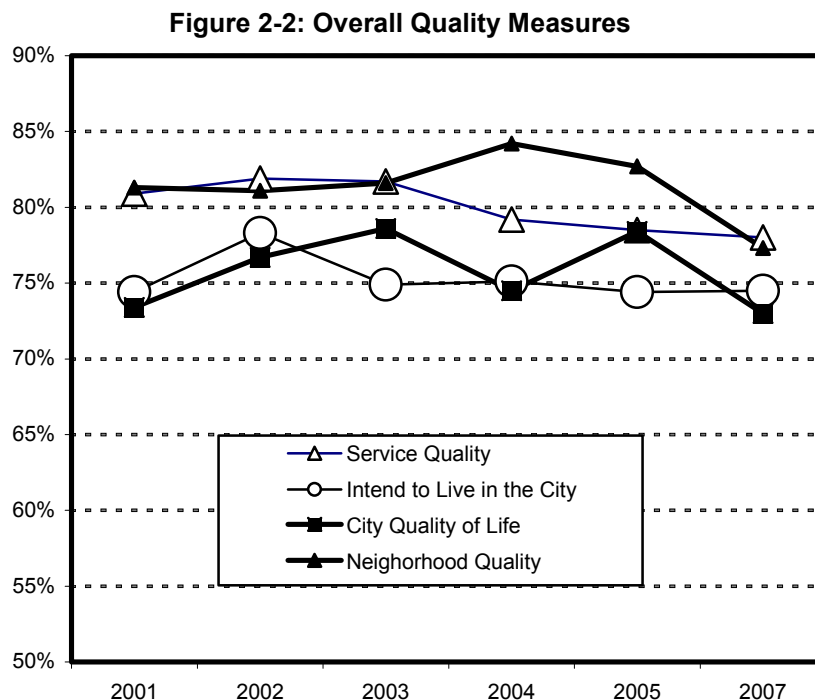
shows that 77 percent of the citizens thought that the quality of their neighborhoods would be either the same or a better place to live.

Citizens' intent to remain living in the City is another overall quality of life assessment tool. If citizens intended to move, there might be some "push" factors, such as their economic circumstances, neighborhood conditions, or City services affecting their decision to consider moving. Figure 2-1 shows that 75 percent of the citizens had no intention of moving from the City in the next two years.

The Memphis Poll also measured quality of life with a broad question. Citizens were asked if they were satisfied with Memphis as a place to live. Figure 2-1 shows that 73 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City. The responses to this question indicated an overall positive assessment of the City. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans about the City's quality of life.

## Trend Data

Next, Figure 2-2 shows the trends in the overall quality measures for the years of the Memphis Poll for which all these data were collected. The trend lines represent the data from 2001 to 2007.



Service quality, as depicted in Figure 2-2, shows a slight decline. Because the change in the trend line is subtle, it remains to be seen if this decline will continue into the next Memphis Poll.

It appears that the trend line for intention to continue living in the City has remained in the same range since 2001.<sup>7</sup> Although this assessment appears to be accurate given the trend line, the discussion below suggests there are important demographic changes in the overall trends.

City quality of life is more difficult to judge since the results appear to be more volatile. In 2001, 74 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's quality of life. By 2005, the measure had risen to 78 percent, but in 2007 the results declined to 73 percent. It remains to be seen in the 2008 Memphis Poll whether the ratings will return to a higher quality of life rating.

The findings about neighborhood quality are a concern. The citizens appear to be losing their optimistic view of the future of their neighborhoods. In 2004, 84 percent of the citizens thought their neighborhood quality would remain the same or better. In 2007 that figure was down to 77 percent. The reasons for this may include high crime (see Chapter 4), physical conditions (see Chapter 9), and weak City services that target neighborhoods (see Chapter 10).

## **Sections of the City**

The four measures of overall quality were examined by sections of the City. These sections provide specific information on the geography of the City. However, the data must be used carefully since each individual section had only a limited number of respondents.<sup>8</sup> The responses for the four measures were averaged for each section of the City. Figure 2-3 displays the results with the most positive areas at the top, while Figure 2-4 provides the same data with the least positive responses listed at the top.

Figure 2-3 highlights the most positive responses by section of the City for the four measures.<sup>9</sup> Southside had the highest overall rating when the four items

---

<sup>7</sup> The measure includes both the citizens who indicated that they had no intention to move in the next two years, and if they moved it would be within the City.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 15 for a discussion of the sections of the City.

<sup>9</sup> Each measure was viewed contextually and the highest responses were discussed. The areas are listed in order of their overall most and least positive response rates. Only the very highest responses were discussed for most positive perceptions and only the very lowest responses were discussed for the least positive responses.



were averaged. Downtown and Midtown had the highest ratings for neighborhood quality. Northside, Southwest and Northeast had the highest scores for service quality. Southside had the highest rating for City quality of life. Southside had the highest score for intending to live in the City.

**Figure 2-3: Most Positive Perceptions by Area**

Area of City	Neighborhood Quality	Service Quality	City Quality of Life	Intend to Live in City	Overall Score
Southside	83%	79%	88%	92%	85%
Downtown	90%	79%	77%	82%	82%
Southwest	81%	84%	80%	79%	81%
Midtown	90%	77%	75%	78%	80%
Northside	75%	85%	76%	77%	78%
Eastside	81%	76%	66%	74%	75%
Fareast	80%	71%	67%	78%	74%
Northwest	68%	66%	76%	72%	71%
Northeast	70%	84%	69%	58%	70%
Southcentral	67%	77%	68%	64%	69%
Southeast	65%	72%	60%	63%	65%

Figure 2-4 examines the same data for areas of the City with the least positive perceptions of the overall quality indicators. Southeast had the lowest overall scores when the four items were averaged.

**Figure 2-4: Least Positive Perceptions by Area**

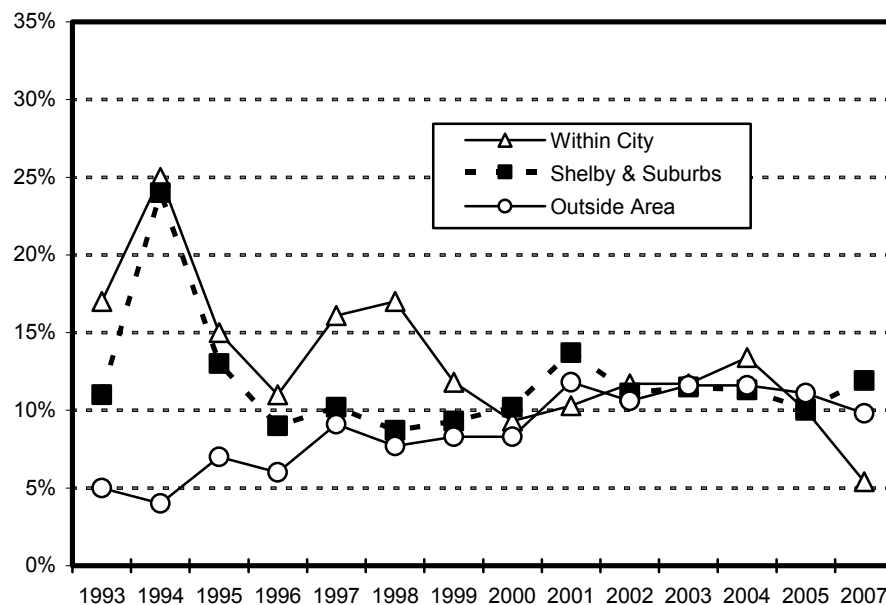
Area of City	Neighborhood Quality	Service Quality	City Quality of Life	Intend to Live in City	Overall Scores
Southeast	65%	72%	60%	63%	65%
Southcentral	67%	77%	68%	64%	69%
Northeast	70%	84%	69%	58%	70%
Northwest	68%	66%	76%	72%	71%
Fareast	80%	71%	67%	78%	74%
Eastside	81%	76%	66%	74%	75%
Northside	75%	85%	76%	77%	78%
Midtown	90%	77%	75%	78%	80%
Southwest	81%	84%	80%	79%	81%
Downtown	90%	79%	77%	82%	82%
Southside	83%	79%	88%	92%	85%

The Southeast, Southcentral and Northwest areas had the least positive ratings for neighborhood quality. Northwest had the lowest score for service quality. Southeast had the lowest rating for City quality of life. Northeast had the smallest percentage of citizens intending to continue living in the City.

## Intention to Move

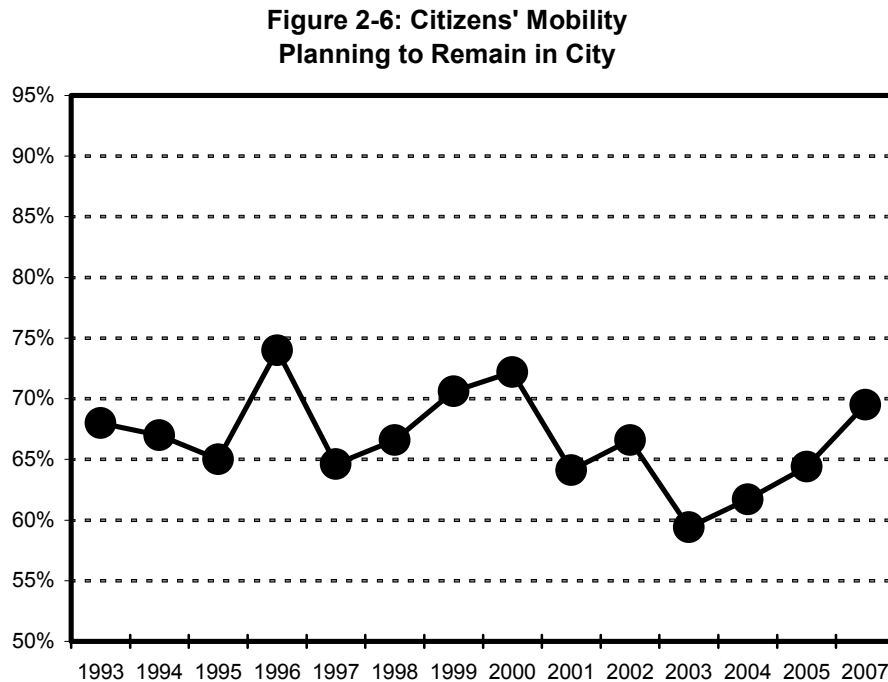
Next, the Memphis Poll provides more detailed information on the citizens' intentions to move. The migration issue is important since the City of Memphis has seen a decline in its population base during the last twenty years. The information in this chapter has important consequences for the fiscal health of the City. Citizens who remain in the City are taxpayers and customers who finance City services. The movement to the suburbs is especially important to monitor because the suburbs are the direct residential competitors with the City of Memphis. The suburbs include any area within the metropolitan area located outside the City boundaries. The metropolitan area includes Shelby County, West Tennessee, North Mississippi, and East Arkansas.

**Figure 2-5: Citizens' Mobility—Planning to Move within Two Years**



Citizens who indicated an intention to move within the next two years were asked where they intended to move. Figure 2-5 provides data for all fourteen years of the Memphis Poll. Figure 2-5 shows that the findings for 2007 are in the normal range for the suburbs and outside the area. An almost equal percentage of citizens (11 percent and 10 percent, respectively) planned to move to the suburbs and outside the greater Memphis metropolitan area. In contrast, those planning to move within the City boundaries have declined from 10 percent in 2005 to 5 percent in 2007.

Figure 2-6 examines the trend line for those planning to remain within the City. This measure is the sum of those not planning to move (called non-movers) and those who plan to move but remain in the City. The results for 2007 are about the same level as previous years. In fact, there appears to be small increases since 2003 when 60 percent of the citizens intended to remain within the City. In 2007, 70 percent planned to remain within the City.



## Race and Intention to Move

Figure 2-7 indicates important differences<sup>10</sup> between African Americans' and whites' moving patterns. The results show that African Americans were slightly more apt to be non-movers. However, African Americans who planned to move were more likely than whites to remain in the City.

Figure 2-7 shows that when asked where they would move, whites were more likely to move outside of Shelby County while African Americans would be more apt to move within the City boundaries.

<sup>10</sup> The percentages in Figure 2-7 may vary slightly because of software rounding.

**Figure 2-7: Race and Planning to Move in 2007**

Type of Moving	Whites	African Americans	Difference
Non-Movers	67%	71%	-4%
Planning to Remain in City	72%	77%	-5%
<b>If Moving, Where</b>			0%
Within City	15%	23%	-8%
Shelby County	18%	16%	2%
Suburbs Outside Shelby	32%	23%	10%
Outside Metropolitan Area	35%	39%	-4%

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Citizens' assessment of the City's overall quality remained high, except for neighborhood quality. Citizens seemed less optimistic about their neighborhoods.
- ❑ Residents of the Southside area had the most positive overall assessment of the City.
- ❑ Residents of Southeast area had the least positive overall assessment of the City.
- ❑ Although the percentages of whites and African Americans intending to move were similar, there were striking racial differences in *where* citizens intended to move. African Americans intended to move within the City boundaries, whereas whites intended to move to the suburbs outside Shelby County.

## Chapter 3

### Service Priorities

This chapter examines the importance that citizens attached to various City services. Decisions to improve specific services can be based on those services to which citizens attached a greater priority.

This is an especially important chapter since it provides a context for viewing services and concerns. The reader should match the evaluation for a specific service (for example, police) to the level of importance that the citizens attach to the service area (for example, crime prevention). Citizens may view a service area as very important, but they may perceive that the level of the service delivery is mediocre. Or, citizens may perceive a problem as very extensive, but they may attach a lower priority to solving that problem.

Citizens were asked how important various priorities were to the overall quality of Memphis. Figure 3-1 shows the percentage of citizens who thought the services were “very important” to the overall quality of Memphis.<sup>11</sup> Figure 3-2 reports differences between African American and white citizens.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Tier 1: High Priority Service**

Crime protection received the highest priority ranking by the citizens. Figure 3-1 shows that 84 percent of the citizens thought police protection against crime was the most important service provided by the City. These results should be compared to Chapter 4, which shows that citizens were highly concerned about crime in their neighborhoods.

Citizens also identified providing fire protection (78 percent) and funding public schools (76 percent) as high priority services. The Memphis City Schools’ 2007-2008 proposed budget showed 11 percent of the funding for the schools is from

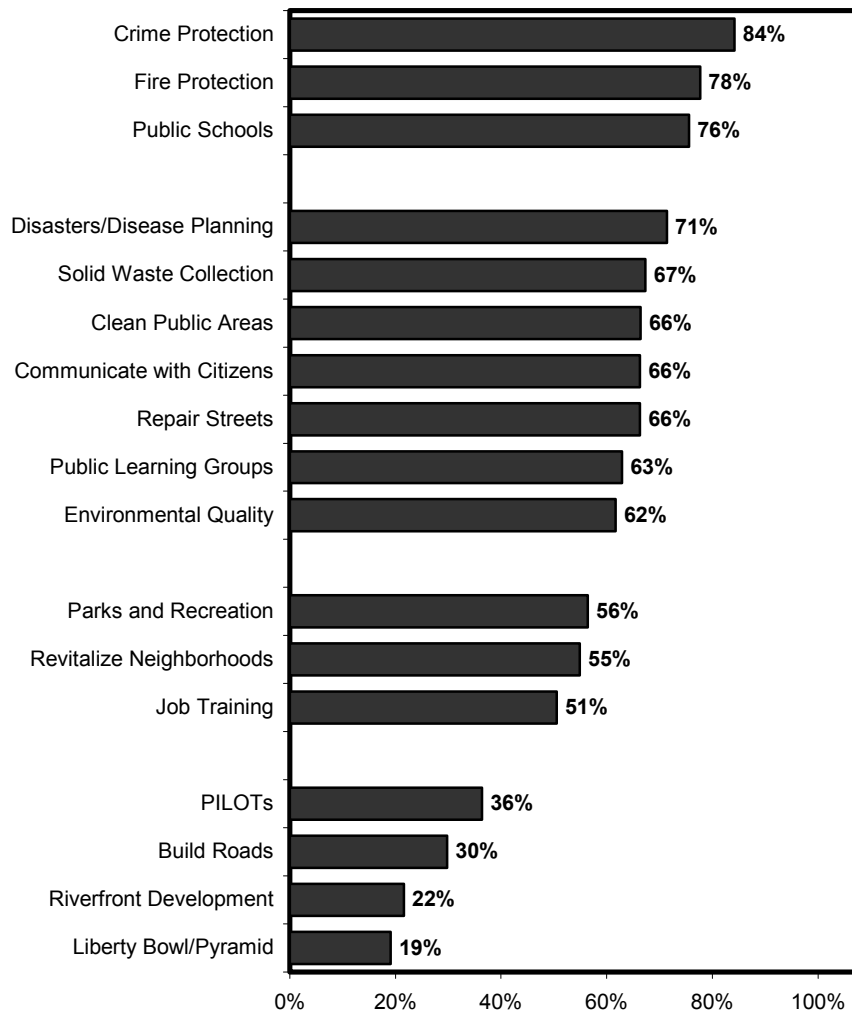
---

<sup>11</sup> The responses rates for these questions were very high: PILOTs (95 percent), riverfront development (95 percent), Liberty Bowl/Pyramid (96 percent), build roads (96 percent), revitalize neighborhoods (98 percent), parks and recreation (98 percent), environmental quality (98 percent), job training (99 percent), public schools (99 percent), disasters/disease planning (99 percent), public learning groups (99 percent), repair streets (99 percent), communicate with citizens (99 percent), solid waste collection (99 percent), clean public areas (99 percent), fire protection (100 percent), and crime protection (100 percent).

<sup>12</sup> The Memphis Poll reports response differences between African Americans and whites that are 10 percent or greater.

the City of Memphis. Figure 3-2 shows that whites identified fire protection as a higher priority than African Americans did.

**Figure 3-1: Citizens' Ranking of Service Priorities**



## **Tier 2: Moderate Priority Services**

The second tier is categorized as moderate priority services. As displayed in Figure 3-1, priorities in this tier received scores between 71 and 62 percent of citizens viewing the services as very important.

The Tier 2 priorities included: planning for disasters and diseases (71 percent), solid waste collection (67 percent), cleaning public areas by street sweeping, picking up litter, and mowing vacant lots (66 percent), communicating with citizens and responding to their requests (66 percent), repairing streets (66 percent), funding public learning groups such as the public libraries, the Zoo,

museums, and arts (63 percent), and addressing the environmental quality of the air, rivers, and streams (62 percent).

### **Tier 3: Lower Priority Services**

The third tier is categorized as lower priority services. While a majority of citizens supported these services as very important to the City, an almost equal number of citizens did not see them as very important.

Tier 3 priorities included providing recreational programs and park facilities for children and adults (56 percent), providing programs to revitalize neighborhoods, reducing decay, and providing affordable housing (55 percent), and providing job training and skill development programs for unemployed and under-employed Memphians (51 percent).

All three of these services showed declines of at least 5 percent from the 2005 Memphis Poll. Figure 3-2 shows African Americans placed a higher priority on job training and revitalizing neighborhoods than whites did.

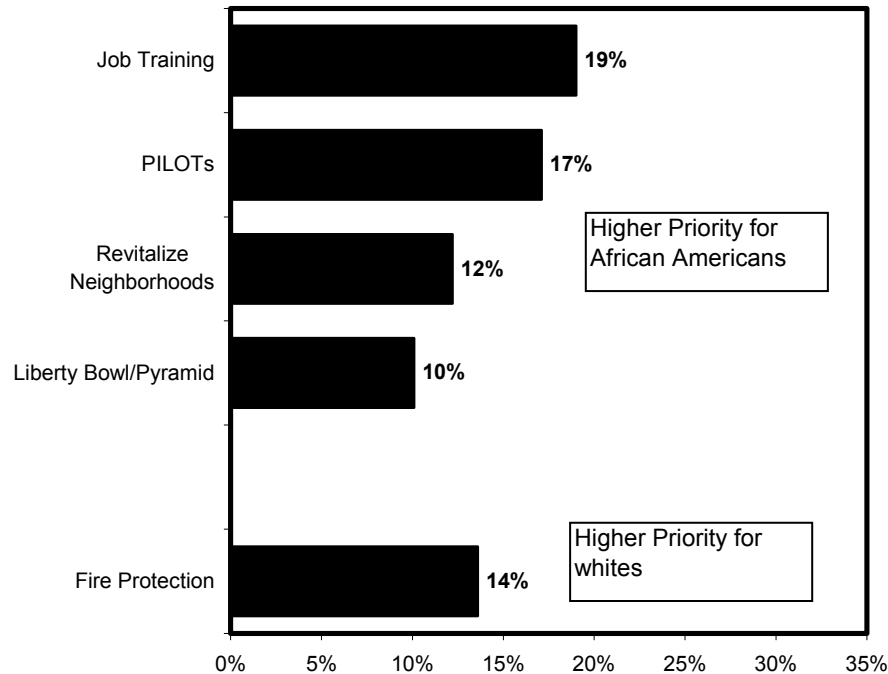
The results for revitalizing neighborhoods were especially surprising. Chapter 9 shows that citizens were highly concerned about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods. On the basis of those findings citizens might have supported neighborhood revitalization.

However, Chapter 10 shows that citizens thought the programs meant to support neighborhood revitalization were mediocre and Chapter 4 showed that citizens were concerned about crime. Though, none of these areas showed a pronounced relationship to supporting neighborhood revitalization.

### **Tier 4: Very Lowest Priority Services**

Tier 4 contains the very lowest priority services. The levels of support for these options were as follows: PILOTs which are property tax breaks for businesses (36 percent), building new roads and streets (30 percent), riverfront development (22 percent), and funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium and Pyramid (19 percent). The ratings for the Liberty Bowl and Pyramid were about the same as in 2005. The three other questions are new. Figure 3-2 shows African Americans were more supportive of PILOTs, and funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium and Pyramid. However, even among African Americans, the importance of these two options was only 23 percent.

**Figure 3-2: Citizens' Ranking of Service Priorities -  
Difference in Perceptions for  
African Americans Compared to Whites**



## Taxes and Spending

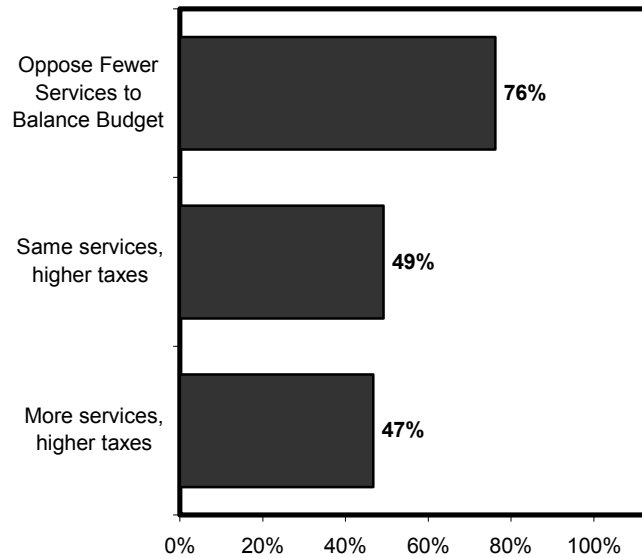
The 2007 Memphis Poll examined the citizens' perceptions of taxing and spending.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 3-3 shows that 76 percent of the citizens were opposed to services reductions in order to balance the budget. The results reflect a strong priority by the citizens to preserve existing services. In contrast the citizens were divided on the other two options. Just under half, 49 percent, were willing to support the same services with higher taxes and only 47 percent wanted more services if that required higher taxes.

<sup>13</sup> The response rate for each of these questions (oppose fewer services, same services-higher taxes, more services-higher taxes) was 92 percent.



**Figure 3-3: Citizens' Support of Various Tax and Service Options**



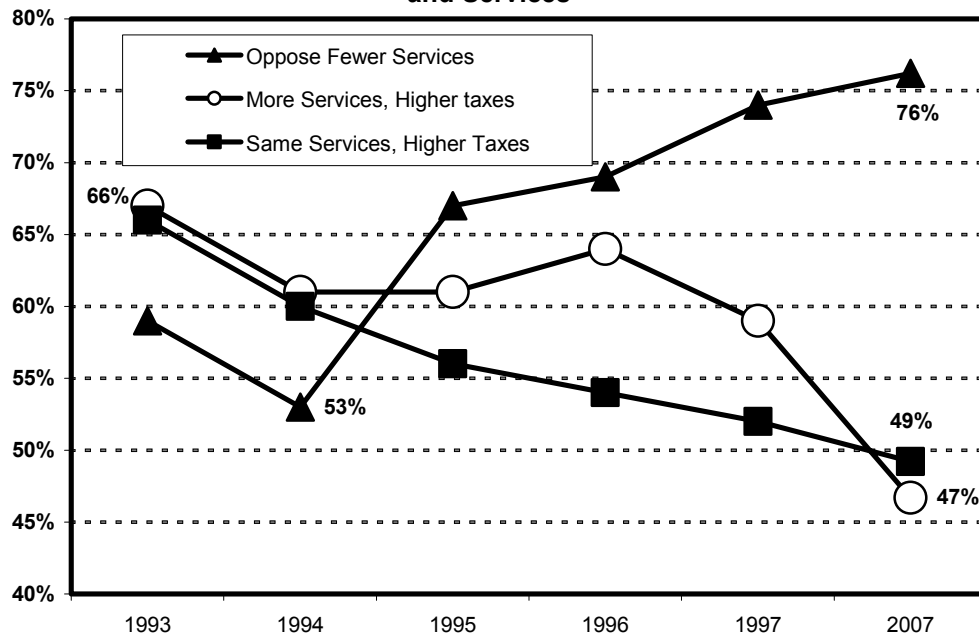
Similar questions were asked in the Memphis Poll from 1993 to 1997. The questions were not asked between 1998 and 2005. The results in Figure 3-4 show increasing opposition over time to service reductions. In 1994, 53 percent of the citizens were opposed to service reductions—in 2007, 76 percent of the citizens were opposed to some reductions.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, the two options for higher taxes have steadily lost support over time. For example, those supporting more services with higher taxes have declined from 66 percent in 1993 to 47 percent in 2007. Whites were less supportive of higher taxes than African Americans.

---

<sup>14</sup> The question wording was different in 2007 than in previous years, though it does not appear to have affected the results.

**Figure 3-4: Citizens' Perceptions of various Options for Taxes and Services**



### Key Findings

- ❑ Crime protection had the highest priority of any City services. It was closely followed by providing fire protection and funding public schools.
- ❑ Four priorities had exceptionally low ratings: funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium and Pyramid, riverfront development, building new roads and streets, and PILOTs which are property tax breaks for businesses.
- ❑ Citizens were opposed to reducing services in order to balance the budget.

# Chapter 4

## Concerns about Crime

This chapter examines the citizens' assessments of crime in their neighborhoods. It also provides information about specific types of crime-related concerns. When interpreting the data in this chapter, a higher number means that citizens were more concerned about crime. A trend line that moves up suggests that citizens were more concerned about crime over time.

### Indicators of Specific Crimes

This section describes the portion of the Memphis Poll that deals with citizens' perceptions of specific crimes in their neighborhoods. A select number of crime-related indicators were examined to detect how well City services were addressing problems most immediate to the citizens' living space. This chapter is important since citizens described the quality of their immediate living environment.

**Figure 4-1: Citizens' Concerns About Specific Crime Problems in Neighborhoods**

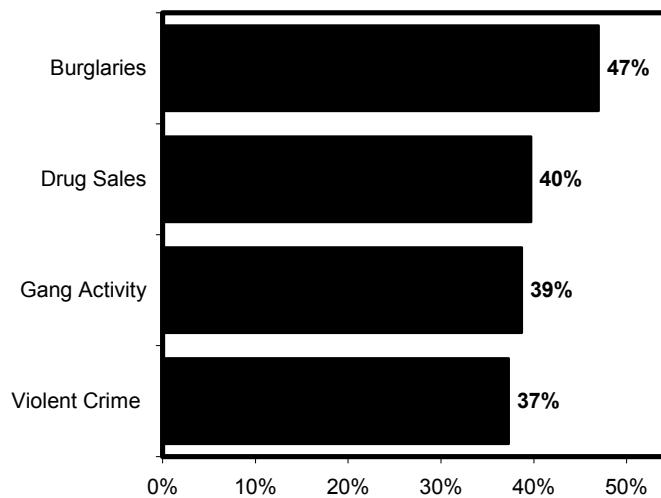


Figure 4-1 presents the data as the percentage of citizens who saw each listed crime issue as a serious problem.<sup>15</sup> The specific indicators selected were four of

<sup>15</sup>Citizens' concerns may or may not be influenced by the crime that actually occurs in the neighborhood. These data deal with concerns about crime and not the actual level of crime. The questions were developed to determine whether crime were concerns within the neighborhoods. Crime occurs in areas other than neighborhoods and the data may not be directly comparable to reported crime. The polling data are not

the most relevant issues for many Memphians.<sup>16</sup> Violent crime is considered the most serious of all crimes. Burglaries are a concern for many because criminals are entering a person's home or other premises. Drug sales are seen as contributing to the seriousness of crime. Membership in a gang is not a crime, but it is perceived by many that gangs extensively contribute to criminality.

Figure 4-1 shows that concerns about specific crime items were extensive. Burglaries were the highest concern with 47 percent troubled about them. Drug sales (40 percent), gang activity (39 percent), and violent crime (37 percent) were next on the list of crime concerns.

African Americans expressed greater concerns about drug sales (17 percent), gang activity (16 percent), and violent crime (16 percent) than whites did.

## **Trends in Crime**

Figure 4-2 examined trend data for burglaries and violent crimes. The data suggest clusters of variation over the years of the Memphis Poll. Before the 2007 Poll, burglaries have consistently been within 7 percent – both above and below – the 30 percent mark. Similarly, violent crimes have consistently ranged within 5 percent above and below the 20 percent mark.

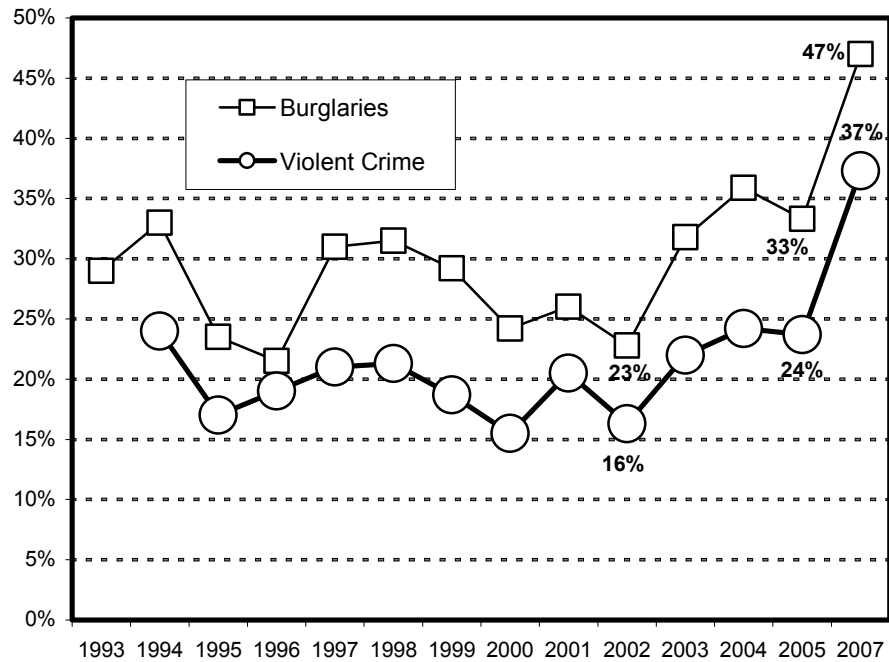
However, the 2007 Memphis Poll shows extensive increases in concerns about both burglaries and violent crime. Concerns about burglaries increased 14 percent over the two year period from 2005 to 2007. Concerns about violent crime increased 13 percent over the two years. These data show a pronounced “spike” in concerns about burglaries and violent crime.

---

directly comparable to reported crime since a number of reports could be generated from a single household. Not all crime is reported to the police. The polling measures reflect concerns about particular types of crime, rather than a reflection of the total number of crimes. Several crime-related items do not translate directly into reported crime categories. The two areas of specific concerns most applicable to police department statistics are violent crime and burglaries.

<sup>16</sup> The responses rates for these questions were: burglaries (96 percent), violent crime (96 percent), gangs (94 percent), and drug sales (91 percent).

**Figure 4-2: Citizens' Concerns About Burglaries and Violent Crime**



**Figure 4-3: Citizens's Concerns About Gangs and Drug Sales**

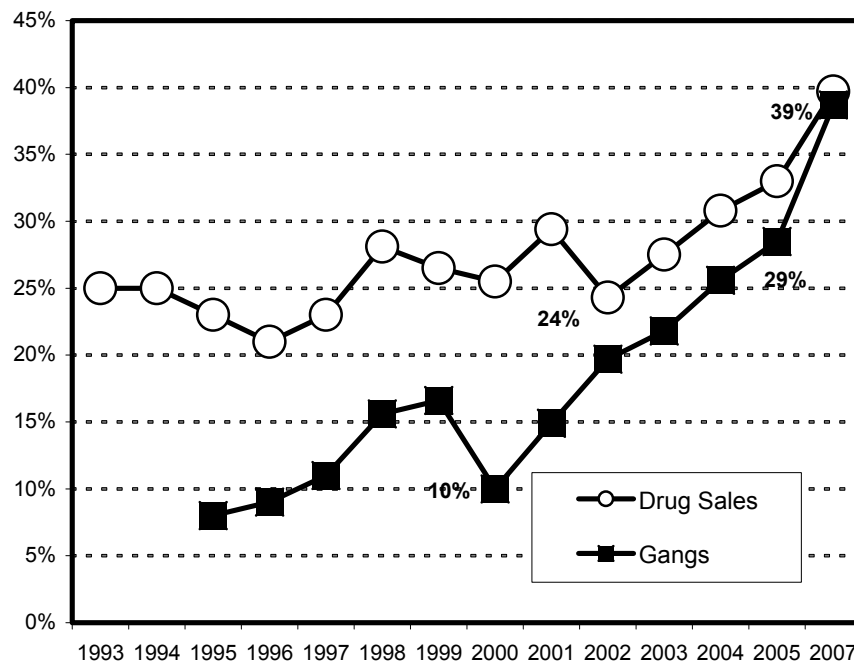


Figure 4-3 shows citizens' concerns about drug sales and gangs are increasing. Over the last six Polls there has been a substantial increase in concerns about

gangs, from 10 percent in 2000 to 39 percent in 2007. Concerns about drug sales have increased from 24 percent in 2002 to 39 percent in 2007. Concerns about all four crime indicators are at the highest level in the history of the Memphis Poll.

Next, the Memphis Poll combined these four specific indicators into an index. An index provides a summary measure of the data, which can be examined over time. Figure 4-4 shows the numerical average over the years for which these four items were measured. This data indicate mounting concerns for these four very important crime categories since the 2002 Memphis Poll. As with the previous charts, the data show a “spike” of 11 percent in concerns about crime trends when comparing 2005 and 2007.

**Figure 4-4: Averages for Citizens' Concerns About Specific Crimes Trends**

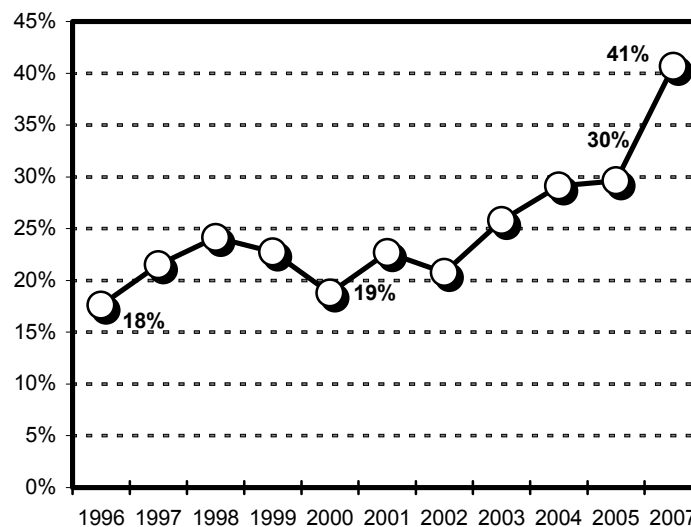
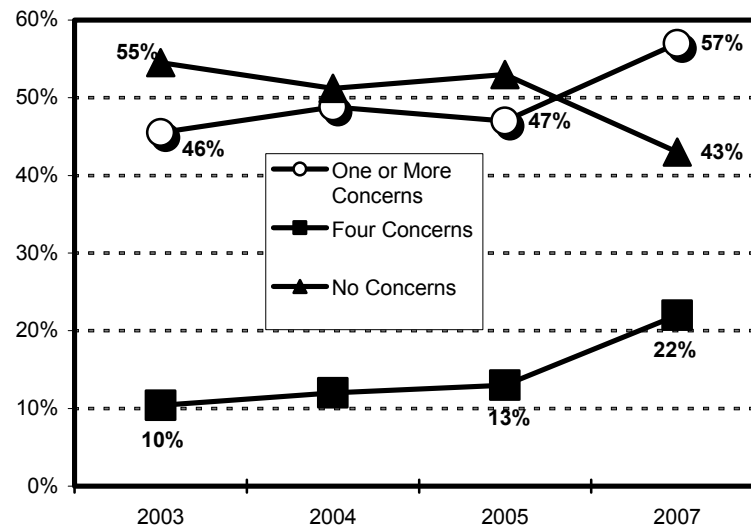


Figure 4-5 further demonstrates the citizens concerns about the four specific crime categories in their neighborhoods. The results show an increase in the percentage of residents with one or more concerns. In 2003, 46 percent of the citizens had one or more concerns, but this increased to 57 percent in 2007. Most of this increase occurred in the last two years, 2005 to 2007. In contrast, the percentage of citizens with no concerns about the four areas declined from 55 percent in 2003 to 43 percent in 2007.

Figure 4-5 is even more troubling when it examines the percentage of citizens that had concerns about all four crime categories. In 2003, only 10 percent of the citizens were concerned about all four areas, while in 2007, the figure more than

doubled to 22 percent. The greatest increase was between 2005 and 2007 which showed a 9 percent change.

**Figure 4-5: Percent Citizens with Concerns about Crime**



## Overall Assessment

The Memphis Poll next examines a more general perception of crime in the citizens' neighborhoods. Specifically, the Poll asked Memphis citizens whether they thought crime rates in their neighborhoods were increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. The question specifically limited the answer to the past year and to the citizens' neighborhoods. The question referred to crime in a general nature, rather than specific crime categories.<sup>17</sup>

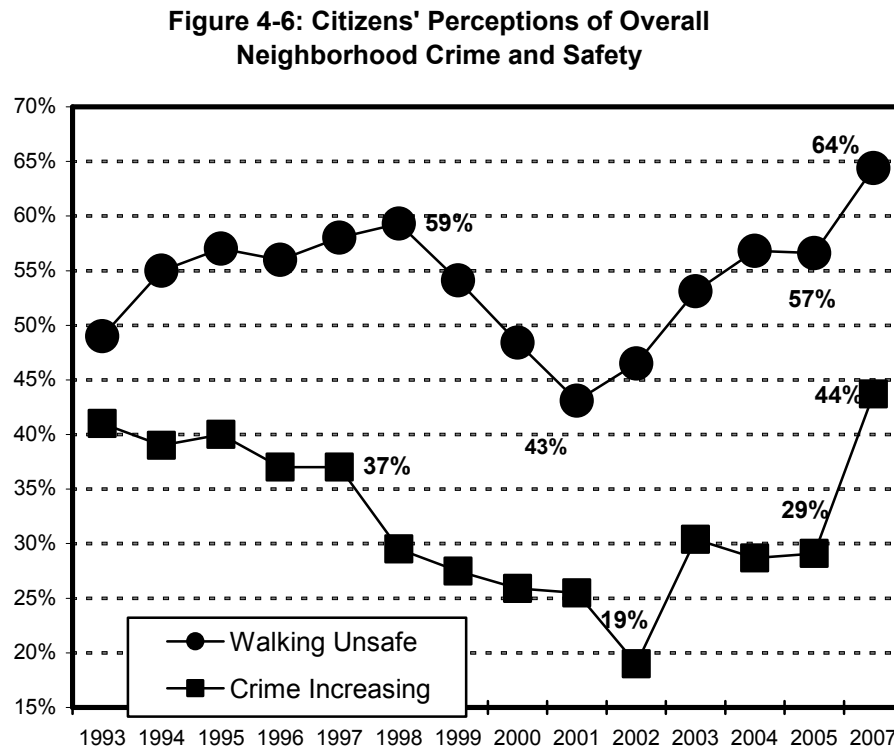
Figure 4-6 shows that 44 percent of the citizens perceived crime as increasing in their neighborhoods. As with the previous data, Figure 4-6 shows a "spike" in concerns about increasing crime, from 29 percent in 2005 to 44 percent in 2007. Whites were more concerned about crime increasing than African Americans.

The Poll also examined citizens' perceptions of personal safety. The Poll asked citizens whether they felt safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The response rate for this crime question was 97 percent.

<sup>18</sup> The actual question asked the citizens if they felt safe or unsafe walking alone in their neighborhood at night. Figure 4-6 graphs the results for unsafe so there is consistency with the trend lines, which makes the graph easier to read. The results would have been the same if safe had been used, although it would have been inconsistent with the direction of the other measures in this section.

Figure 4-6 displays the results of the question on personal safety. The 2007 Memphis Poll showed that 64 percent of the citizens felt unsafe walking alone at night.<sup>19</sup> The data suggest increasing concerns about personal safety since 2001.



## Sections of the City

The Poll examined the trend data to determine whether specific sections of the City expressed higher levels of concern regarding crime in 2007 compared to 2005. The Poll investigated the results by area of the City to identify sections that may have experienced an increase or decrease in crime-related concerns over the previous year.

Compared to 2004, the 2005 Memphis Poll findings were very positive and did not reveal any areas with increases in crime concerns that were 10 percent or higher. In fact two areas, Southcentral and Fareast, actually had fewer concerns about crime.

<sup>19</sup> The response rate for this question on safety was 98 percent.



**Figure 4-7: Percent Greater Concerns  
about Crime By Section of City**

Areas	Percent Difference 2007 and 2005
Eastside	25%
Fareast	24%
Northwest	23%
Southcentral	19%
Northeast	17%
Southeast	16%
Downtown	13%
Southwest	13%
Midtown	9%
Southside	8%
Northside	2%

In contrast, Figure 4-7 shows that increasing concerns about crime were found throughout the City in 2007. The Eastside, Fareast and Northwest areas showed the highest increases when comparing 2005 and 2007. Northside, Southside and Midtown showed the lowest levels of increasing crime concerns.

### **Comparison to Police Data**

The Memphis Poll results show historically high concerns about crime. The findings reflect all of the crime categories and all sections of the City. The polling data were compared to actual police reports about crime incidents, called the Uniform Crime Report.

An examination of crime incidents was provided by the police for the twelve months before the Poll interviewing. It showed increases in overall crime and even larger increases in violent crime. However, after a two-year period of increasing crime, the crime incident database suggested a reduction in crime for the last three months of 2006. The data for 2005 were not available in a form that could be used by this report.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ The concerns about crime were at historic highs in the 2007 Poll.
- ❑ The time period of 2005 to 2007 shows consistent “spike” in the citizens’ concerns about crime.
- ❑ Concerns that crime was increasing were found throughout the City, but were highest in Eastside, Fareast, and Northwest.

## Chapter 5

### Division of Police Services

The previous chapter showed that citizens were concerned about crime in their neighborhoods. It is an assumption of this Poll that police can make a difference in crime rates by their policies and activities on the street. As a result, it is thought that the police bear the responsibility for positive or negative crime results.

However, other agencies also have a responsibility for assisting in crime prevention. For example, prevention programs dealing with youth may reduce crime. If this were the case, the Division of Park Services would have some responsibility in this area. It could be suggested that programs such as community centers and summer day camps are related to the crime prevention efforts of the City.

In addition, support for neighborhood-based activity, the function of the Center for Neighborhoods, should be a powerful crime prevention tool. An influential study showed that neighborhoods could reduce both crime and physical disorder through “collective efficacy”. Collective efficacy means that neighbors take responsibility for preventing crime through social ties, awareness, and intervention in cases of crime and disorder.<sup>20</sup>

### Perceptions of the Police

The Memphis Poll asked questions about citizens’ perceptions of the activities of police officers in the citizens’ neighborhoods. The Poll examined citizens’ perceptions of the police respectfulness, promptness, crime prevention, and performance.<sup>21</sup>

---

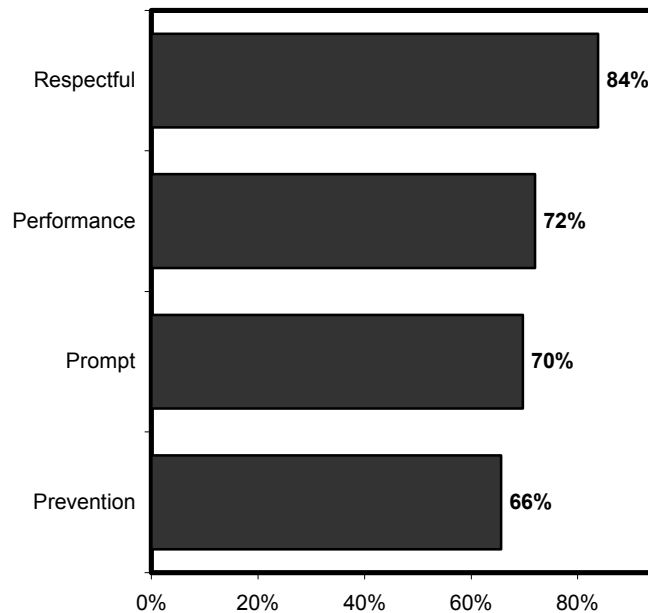
<sup>20</sup> A former Memphian, Felton Earls, has been identified with these research findings in the local media and by the police. See Robert Sampson, Stephen Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, “Neighborhood and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy,” *Science*, volume 277, August 15, 1997, pp. 918-924; Robert Sampson and Stephen Raudenbush, *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods—Does it Lead to Crime?* Washington DC: National Institute of Justice, February 2001; and “Encouraging news from the crime front,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, January 11, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> The response rates for these questions were: respectfulness (95 percent), prevention (92 percent), promptness (89 percent), and performance (27 percent). The lower response rate for performance reflects that only those citizens who made a call for service were asked this question.

Respectfulness is a very important question in the Memphis Poll because of police-community relations. This is often referred to as police legitimacy, which is required if the community is to work closely with the police. Citizens rated police most favorably on respectfulness. This question gauged the perception of personal treatment of citizens by the police in their neighborhoods and not in the City as a whole. Figure 5-1 shows that 84 percent of respondents agreed that the police were respectful.

The Poll also explored how citizens perceived police performance during calls for service. Figure 5-1 shows that 72 percent of the citizens agreed that overall police performance was good during the call for service. This question is one of the most important in the entire Memphis Poll since it only reflects the responses of the citizens who had contact with the police during calls for services. In many cases, these calls for services were at the request of the citizens and therefore citizens may have been approaching police with a positive view.

**Figure 5-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Division of Police Services**



The Poll asked citizens if police were prompt in answering calls in their neighborhoods. This question examined the issue of response time and promptness by obtaining citizens' perceptions of how quickly police answered calls in their neighborhood. Figure 5-1 shows that 70 percent of the respondents agreed that the police were prompt.

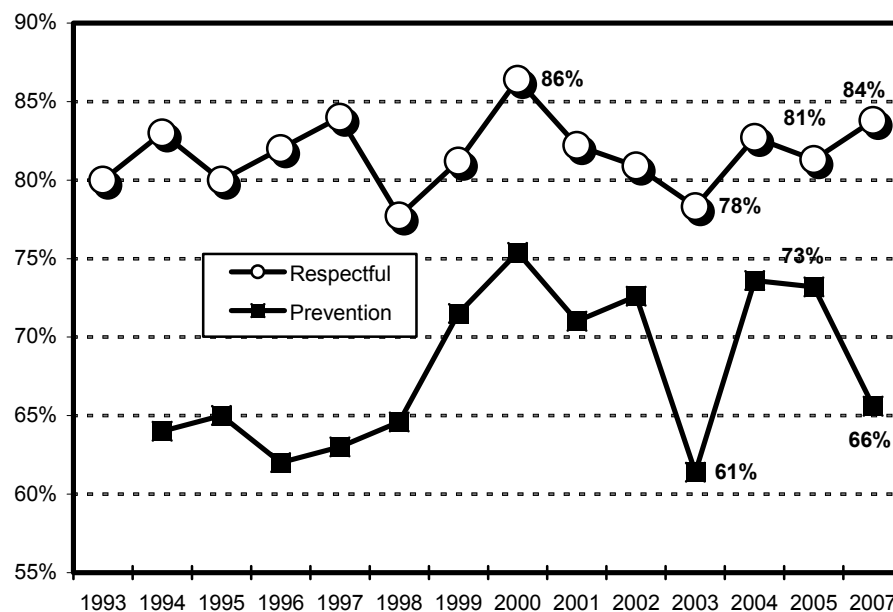
The Poll also asked how effectively the police prevented crime. Figure 5-1 shows that 66 percent of the citizens agreed that the police were doing a good job in the prevention of crime.

The score for respectfulness was above the overall approval rating for City services. The scores for performance, promptness, and prevention were below the overall rating for City services.

## Trend line

The Memphis Poll has examined changes in the four measures of police services over many years. These trends provide the basis for comparing how services were viewed from one year to the next. For instance, an upward sloping trend line would indicate improvement in citizens' perceptions of the service, whereas a downward slope would indicate a decline in perceptions. Figure 5-2 shows the trends for respectfulness and prevention, while Figure 5-3 shows the trends for performance and promptness.

**Figure 5-2: Citizens' Perceptions of Police Services:  
Respectfulness and Prevention**



The trends for respectfulness are very encouraging. Figure 5-2 shows that since the first year of the Memphis Poll, the scores for respectfulness have ranged from 78 percent to 86 percent. The results for 2007 were also positive. Eighty-four (84) percent of the citizens thought the police were respectful in the neighborhoods, which was in the high range of the historic trend line.

The results for prevention are more problematic. Figure 5-2 shows that citizens rated police prevention much lower in 2007 than in the 2005 Memphis Poll. The decline of 7 percent placed prevention in the lower range of the historic trend line. The interpretation of these findings suggests that the citizens have lost confidence in the police crime fighting activities.

Police performance reflects citizens' perceptions of the quality of the officers' work when they responded to calls for services. As mentioned previously, only those citizens who contacted the police for services were asked this question. The trend results in Figure 5-3 are positive. Seventy-two (72) percent of citizens thought the overall performance of the police was good, about the same rating as in 2005. It was in the higher range of the historical trend chart.

**Figure 5-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Police Services:  
Performance on Call for Service and Promptness**

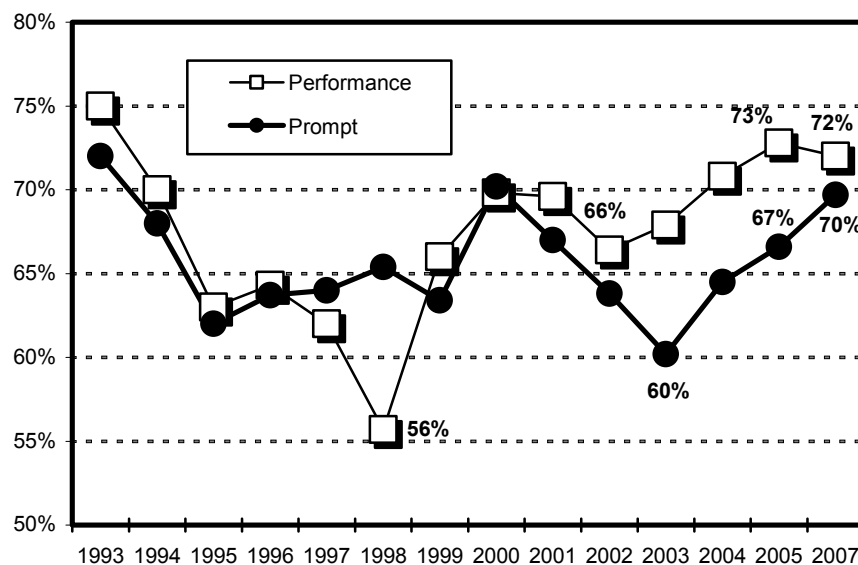


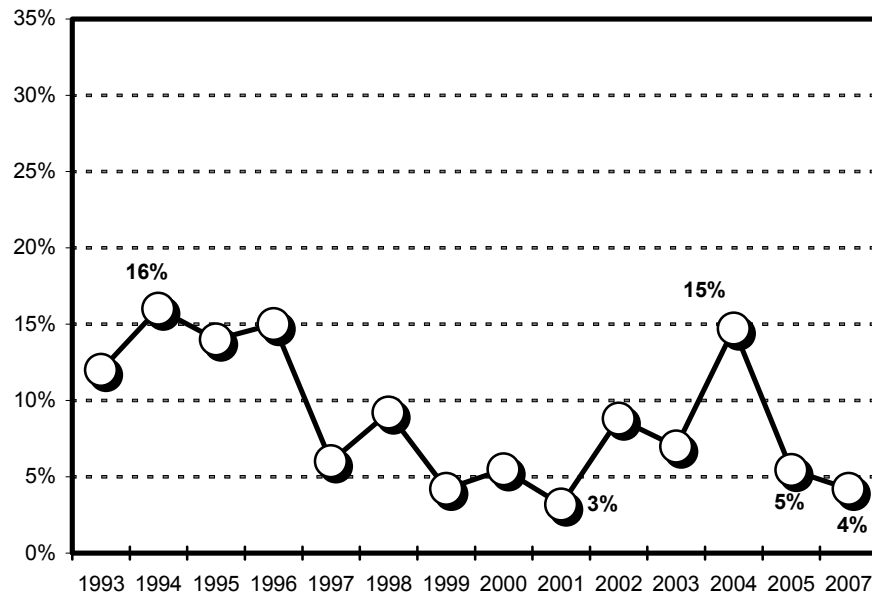
Figure 5-3 also provides information about citizens' ratings for police promptness. After falling 10 percent between 2000 and 2003, promptness ratings have improved, reaching 70 percent in 2007. It also was in the higher range of the historic trend line.

## Race and the Police

The Poll calculated the differences in the scores for each of the four indicators between whites and African Americans. Those four values were then averaged to show the differences in responses between African Americans and whites.

Figure 5-4 shows that the average difference in 2007 between African Americans and whites on the police indicators was 4 percent. In this case a drop in the line reflects less difference between whites and African Americans in perceptions of the police—a positive finding. The difference between African Americans and whites is near the lowest point in all the years of the Memphis Poll and showed an improvement of 11 percent when compared to the 2004 Memphis Poll.

**Figure 5-4: Police Services Average Difference for African Americans & Whites**



However, African Americans were more concerned than whites about police respectfulness.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ The 2007 Memphis Poll found the police were treating citizens respectfully.
- ❑ The scores for promptness show an improvement over the last three years of the Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Citizens are considerably less positive about the police preventing crime.
- ❑ African Americans' and whites' ratings of police services were fairly similar, which was a very positive finding of the 2007 Memphis Poll.



## Chapter 6

### Division of Fire Services

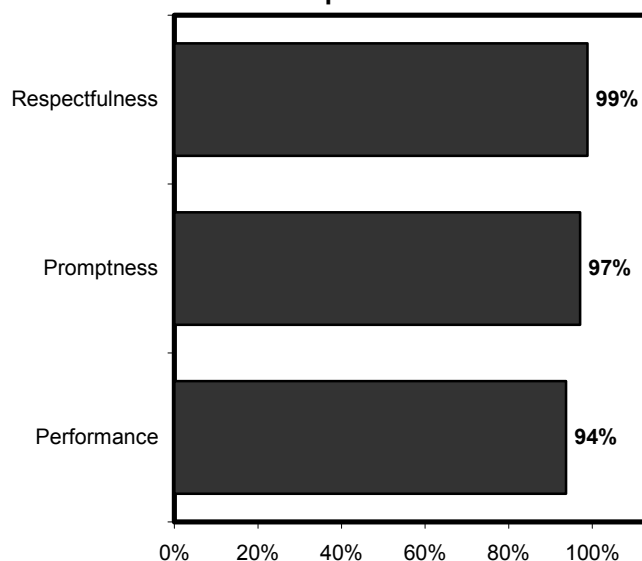
The Division of Fire Services includes both a fire fighting component (called the fire department in this report) and an ambulance/emergency services component (called EMS in this report).

#### The Fire Department

The Poll asked citizens about their perceptions of the fire department. The results are illustrated in Figure 6-1. Each of the three service measures were among the highest scores in the entire Memphis Poll.<sup>22</sup>

Citizens were asked if they agreed that fire department crews were respectful to people in their neighborhood. This statement attempted to gauge the perceptions of citizens' treatment by fire department personnel in the field. In addition, the question focused on the fire department's treatment of citizens in their neighborhood and not in the City as a whole. Ninety-nine (99) percent of the citizens felt that the fire department's crews were respectful.

**Figure 6-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Fire Department**



<sup>22</sup> The response rates for these questions were: respectfulness (92 percent), promptness (91 percent) and performance (10 percent). The lower response rate for performance reflects that only those citizens who made a call for service were asked this question.

The Poll also asked citizens if the fire department was prompt in answering calls in their neighborhoods. This question examined the issue of response time by obtaining citizens' perceptions of how quickly the fire department crews arrived at their destination. Figure 6-1 shows 97 percent of the citizens agreed that the fire department was prompt.

The Poll then examined how citizens perceived the performance of the fire department during calls or contacts for services. Ninety-four (94) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the fire department's performance during calls for services. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans with the fire department's performance.

**Figure 6-2: Overall Trend for Fire Department**

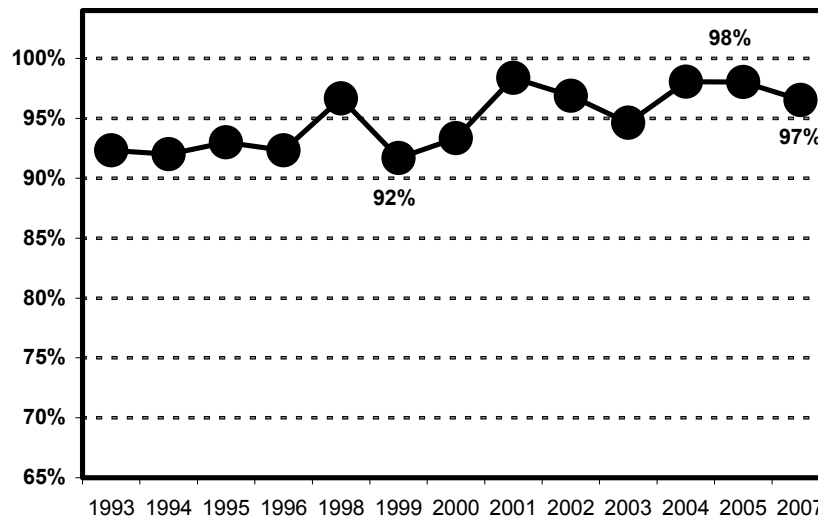


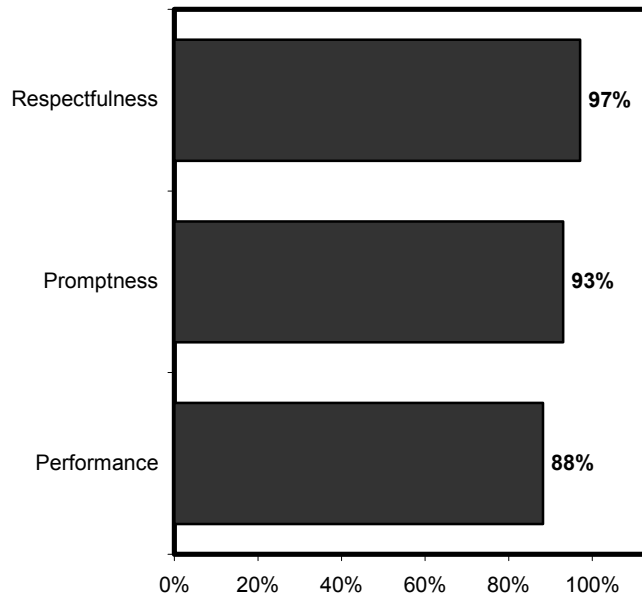
Figure 6-2 provides the overall trend data for the fire department when the three measures are averaged. The score for the three measures was 97 percent in the 2007 Memphis Poll, an impressive result. This figure also shows that the fire department's ratings have been above 90 percent during the fourteen years of the Memphis Poll.

## **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

Prior to 2003, the Memphis Poll combined the calls for the fire department with emergency services to obtain a single score for both of the services. Starting in

2003, separate questions were asked about the City ambulance and paramedic services, called EMS. Figure 6-3 presents the results for emergency services.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 6-3: EMS— Ambulance and Paramedic Services**



Citizens were asked if they agreed that EMS crews were respectful to people in their neighborhood. A very high 97 percent of the citizens felt that EMS crews were respectful.

The Poll next asked citizens if the EMS crews were prompt in answering calls in their neighborhoods. Ninety-three (93) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the EMS crews' promptness.

The Poll also examined how citizens perceived the performance of the EMS during a call or contact for service. Figure 6-3 shows that 88 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the EMS performance. The results for performance was 95 percent in 2005—a decline of 7 percent in 2007.

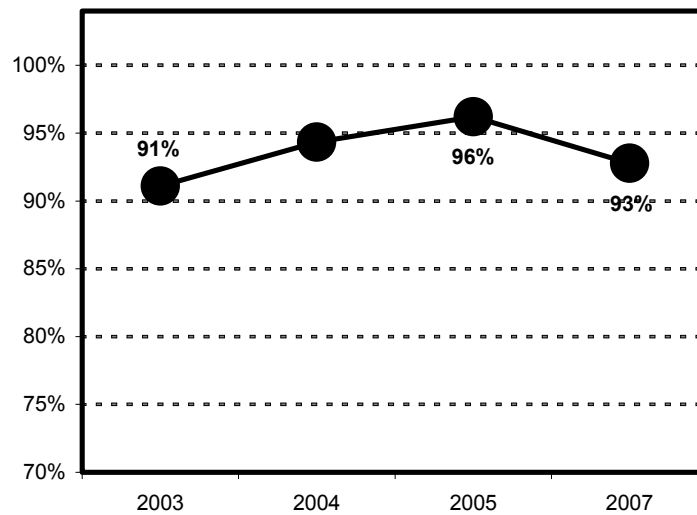
Next, the Memphis Poll examined the four years of trend data available for EMS. Figure 6-4 shows the averages of the three indicators were in the same range over the years, with a score of 96 percent in 2005. However, there was a slight decline in 2007, primarily due to a larger decline in performance. This finding showed

---

<sup>23</sup> The response rates for these questions were: respectfulness (88 percent), promptness (87 percent), and performance (14 percent). The lower response rate for performance reflects that only those citizens who made a call for service were asked this question.

that citizens considered EMS one of the strongest services provided by the City of Memphis.

**Figure 6-4: Overall Trend for EMS—  
Ambulance and Paramedic Services**



### **Key Findings**

- ❑ The Division of Fire Services was the highest-rated division of City government.
- ❑ Both the fire department and EMS ambulance and paramedic services were highly rated.

# Chapter 7

## Division of Park Services

This chapter describes citizens' perceptions of programs delivered by the Division of Park Services. It includes a discussion of both recreation programs (such as community centers) and public learning facilities (such as the Pink Palace Museum).

**Figure 7-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Quality of Park Services**

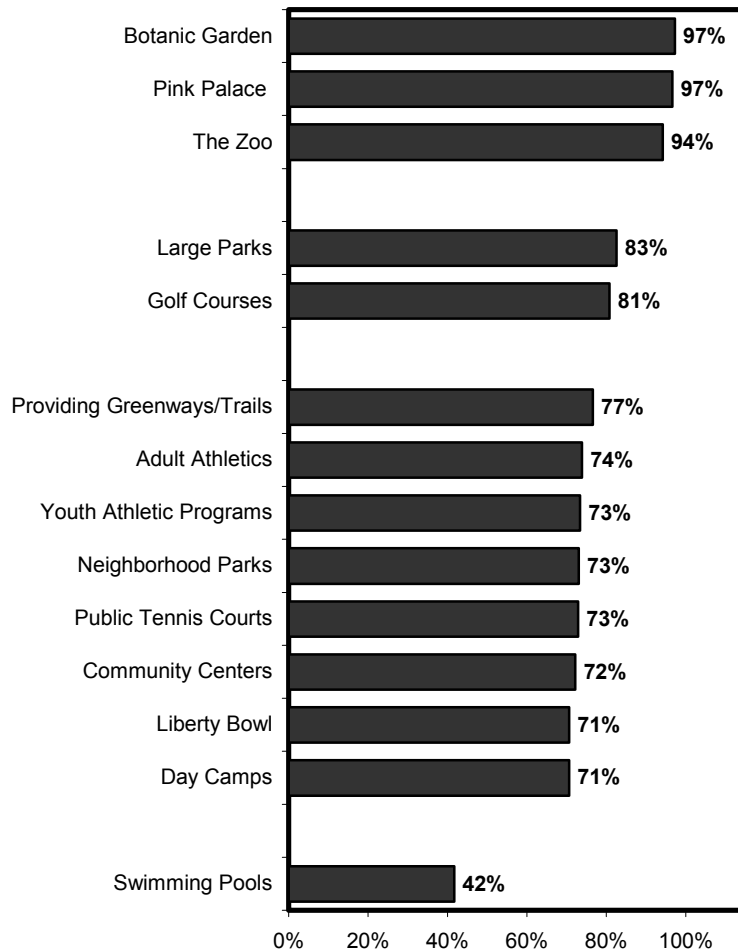
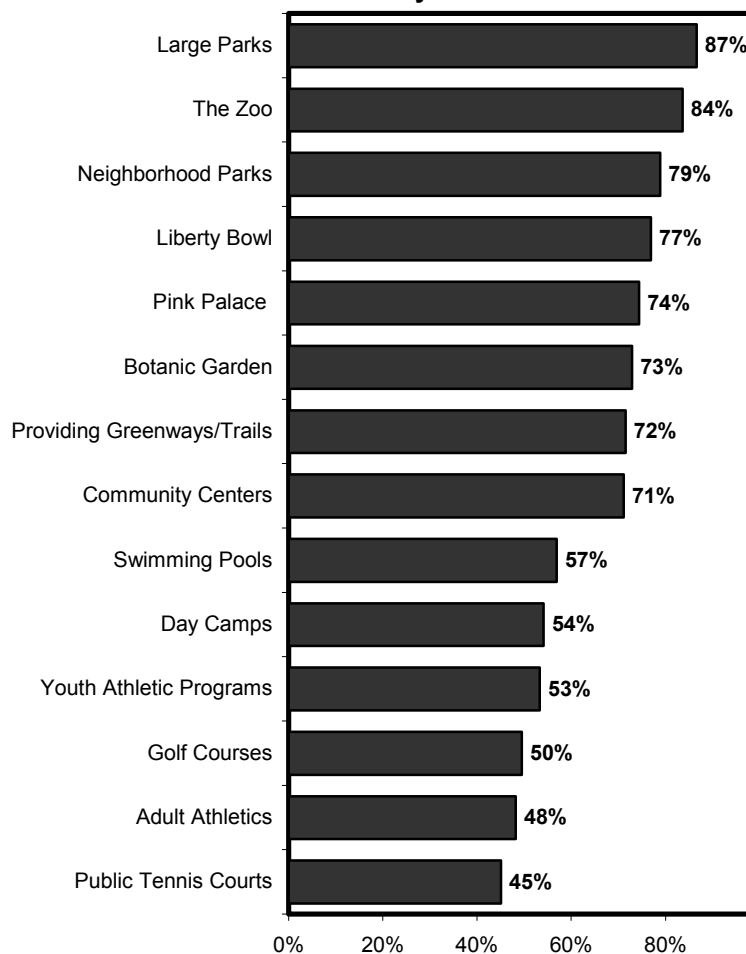


Figure 7-1 shows the percentage of citizens expressing positive views of specific park services. The results in this chapter should be carefully compared to Chapter 3, which shows how citizens prioritized park services when compared to other City services. In addition, the specific ratings for Park Services' programs should be compared to the overall approval ratings for City services, which was 78 percent.

The Park Division administers many different programs. There were some variations in citizens' perceptions about the quality of its services. Figure 7-1 divides the services contextually by examining the clustering of services.

Figure 7-2 provides the response rates for each of the services. Citizens were asked to provide their perceptions only when they were familiar with a specific service. Therefore, a low response rate was appropriate for some services. For example, 87 percent of the citizens responded to large parks, while 45 percent responded to public tennis courts.

**Figure 7-2: Percent Responding to Questions on Quality of Park Services**



**Tier 1 – Exceptional Services:** The highest levels of citizens' satisfaction were found for three programs: the Botanic Garden, the Pink Palace Museum, and the Zoo. Figure 7-1 shows that 94 to 97 percent of the citizens expressed positive views of these programs. These three programs were among the highest ratings in the entire Memphis Poll.

Tier 2—Effective Services: These services were categorized as effective if the scores exceeded the overall City average for services of 78 percent. These services included large parks (83 percent) and golf courses (81 percent).

Tier 3—Respectable Services: Respectable services ranged between 71 and 77 percent. The services in this category were just below the average for the overall approval rating of City services. Respectable services included providing greenways and trails (77 percent), adult athletics (74 percent), youth athletic programs (73 percent), neighborhood parks (73 percent), public tennis courts (73 percent), community centers (72 percent), Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium (71 percent), and summer day camps (71 percent). African Americans were more concerned than whites about tennis courts.

Tier 4—Marginal Service: A marginal service was among the weakest in the entire Memphis Poll and it should receive special scrutiny for that reason alone. Figure 7-1 shows that only 42 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the public swimming pools. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans about public swimming pools, but both groups had very low levels of satisfaction.

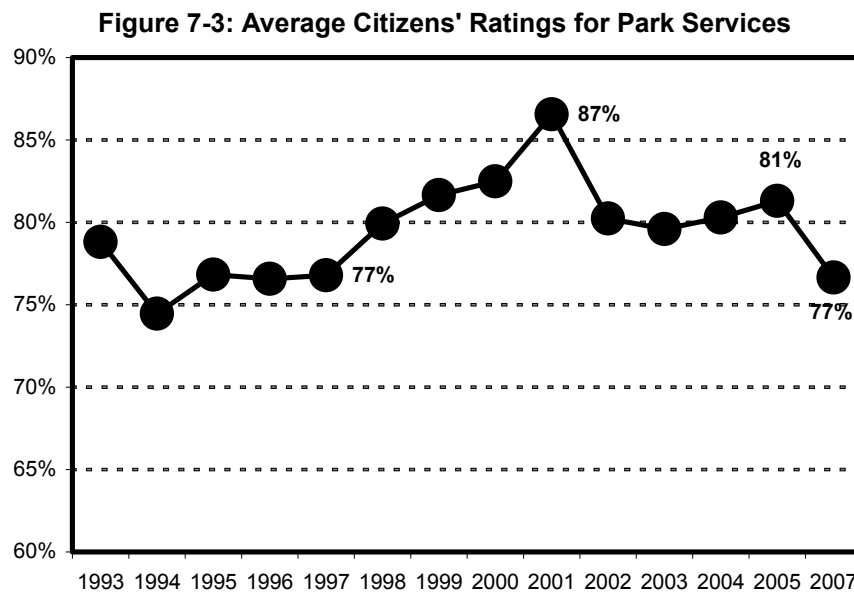
## **Trend Data**

The Memphis Poll combined all of the services to obtain an average rating for the Division of Park Services. Figure 7-3 shows that the ratings stabilized at around 80 percent for the time period of 2002 to 2005. However, the rating in 2007 declined to 77 percent from 81 percent in 2005. This result places the 2007 rating near the historic low of 75 percent set in 1994.<sup>24</sup>

The rating for Division of Park Services is slightly below the overall approval rating of 78 percent for all City services. As described in the following sections, the overall rating reflects a wide range of both positive and less positive ratings for specific programs.

---

<sup>24</sup> Staff members of the Division of Park Services attribute the decline to budget problems that have kept them from properly funding activities.



Another important feature of the ratings in Figure 7-3 was the gradual and consistent improvement from 1997 to 2001. For example, in 1997, seventy-seven (77) percent thought the park services were effective compared to a historic high of 87 percent in 2001. However, in 2002 the ratings dropped to 80 percent and remained at that level for the next three years.<sup>25</sup> As discussed above the ratings dropped in the current Poll.

## Specific Services

This section examines trend data for the specific services provided by the Division of Park Services. Some trend data are available for the entire fourteen years of the Memphis Poll, while other trend data are available for fewer years. Services are grouped into several figures since it is difficult to display a large number of lines on a single figure.

The theme that emerges is that there is wide variation in the performance of these programs over time. Some services had stable citizens' ratings and other services had declining ratings.

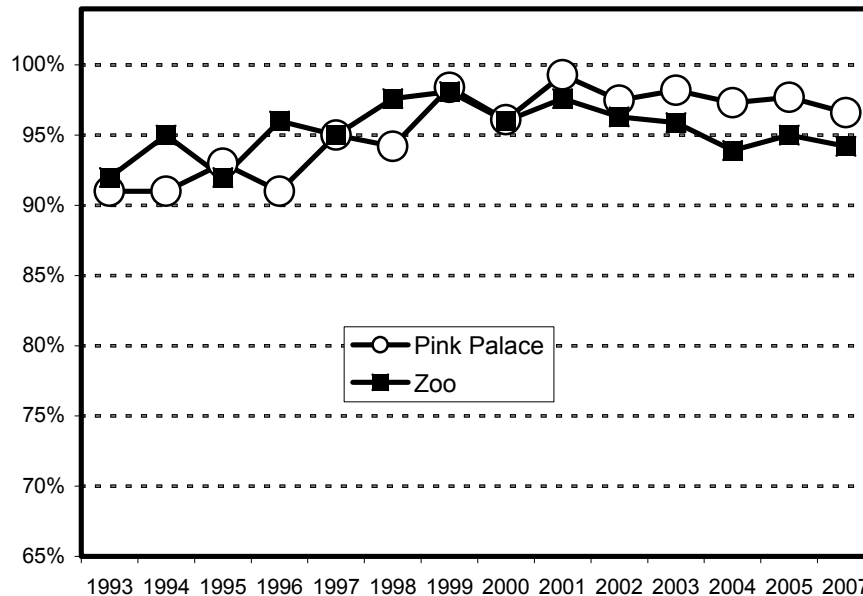
According to the citizens, the Memphis Zoo, the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, and the Memphis Botanic Garden are three of the most effective City services. Figure 7-4 shows that the Zoo and Pink Palace never had a score below 90

<sup>25</sup> A number of hypotheses have been put forth for these changes and they have been discussed with the Division of Park Services.



percent in the fourteen years of the Memphis Poll. In addition, these services have generally shown gradual improvements since the beginning of the Poll. The results for 2007 were in this same range—impressive long term results.

**Figure 7-4: Citizens' Perceptions of Zoo and Pink Palace**



Citizens also saw the Botanic Garden as a very impressive service. The Memphis Poll has only measured citizens' perceptions of the Botanic Garden since 2001. Figure 7-5 shows that the citizens viewed the Botanic Garden as equal to the Pink Palace Museum and the Zoo. The trend data have been consistently high for the Botanic Garden, ranging from 95 to 98 percent. The result for 2007, near 97 percent, is within this impressive range.

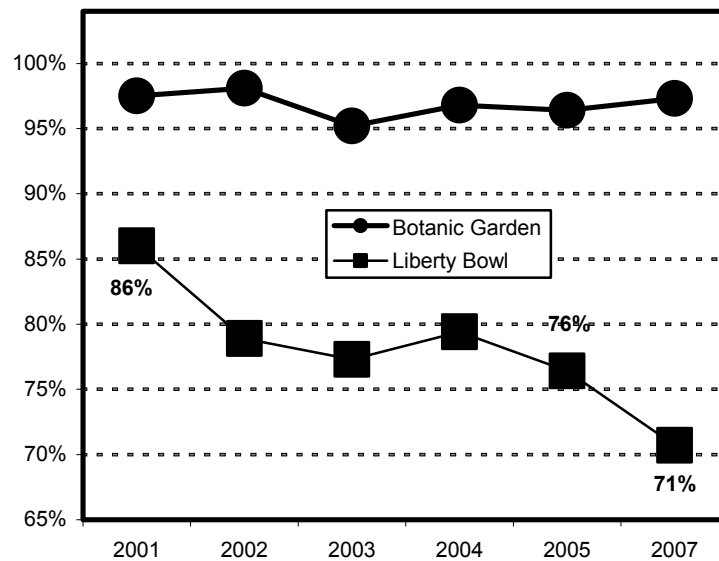
In summary, the Zoo, the Pink Palace, and the Botanic Garden are “signature” services of the City and they have enjoyed impressive scores over time.

Next, the Memphis Poll examined the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium for the five years in which data have been collected. Figure 7-5 shows that perceptions of the Liberty Bowl have declined from 86 percent in 2001 to 71 percent in 2007.

However, this finding needs to be placed into the context of citizens' priorities about public services. Chapter 3 shows that support for improving large public

entertainment facilities, such as the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium and the Pyramid, were the lowest priority of any public services.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 7-5: Citizens' Perceptions of Botanic Garden and Liberty Bowl**



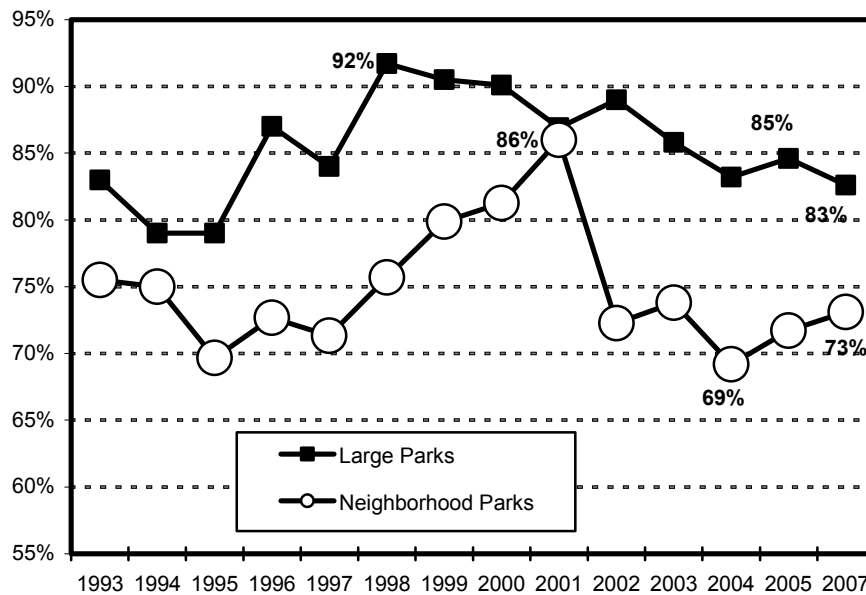
The Memphis Poll next examined the “parks” component of the Division of Park Services. Specifically, it asked citizens about both the large parks and the neighborhood parks. Both of these types of parks have been studied for the entire fourteen years of the Memphis Poll.

The trend lines in Figure 7-6 shows similar patterns for both large and neighborhood parks, although large parks have a higher rating. These services showed a significant improvement from 1995 to 1998. Large parks had very impressive ratings in 1998 with a score of 92 percent, which placed large parks in the elite level of City services. The ratings for large parks declined slowly after that year and reached a low score of 83 percent in 2007.

Figure 7-6 also provides the ratings for neighborhood parks. The citizens’ ratings climbed from 70 percent in 1995 to 86 percent in 2001. There was a precipitous decline in the 2002 score. Thereafter, the ratings have been in the range of 69 to 74 percent, with 2007 staying in that range at 73 percent.

<sup>26</sup> As an interesting contrast, the programs for children in Figures 7-9 and 7-10 have similar scores and patterns of decline.

**Figure 7-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Large Parks and Neighborhood Parks**



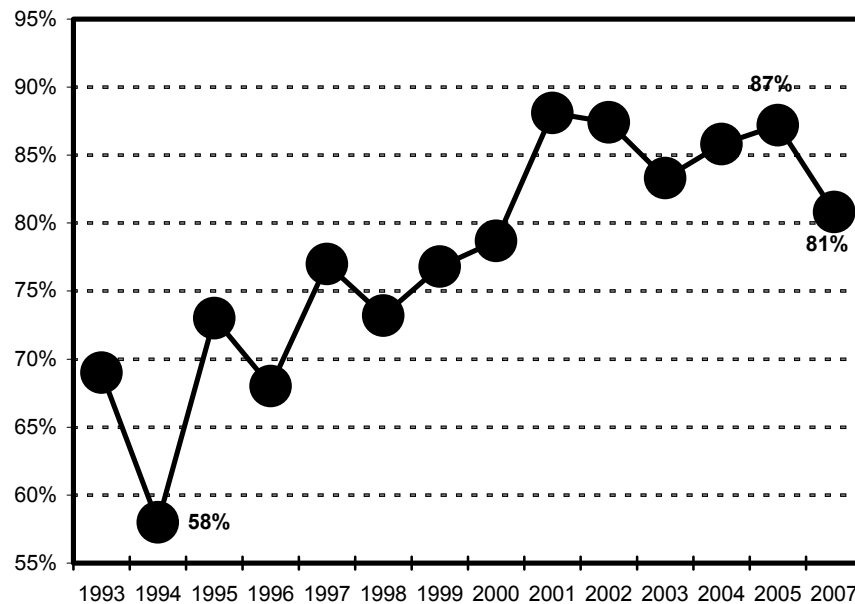
Concerns have been expressed about the lower ratings of the neighborhood parks, since they are part of the core mission of the Division of Park Services. Staff in the program attributed the problem to the lower priority of the parks in City funding which resulted in less maintenance.<sup>27</sup>

The Memphis Poll next examined citizens' perceptions of the quality of the City golf courses. In contrast to the parks, the improvement for golf courses has been impressive. Figure 7-7 shows that the low point for citizens' perceptions of the golf course was 58 percent in 1994 and the highpoint of 87 percent was again reached in 2005. The ratings declined by 6 percent between 2005 and 2007 to a score of 81 percent. However the rating for golf courses was higher than the 78 percent score for overall City services.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> A small number of neighborhood parks was visited after the 2005 Memphis Poll and maintenance problems such as limbs scattered throughout the parks, graffiti on signs, and litter were found.

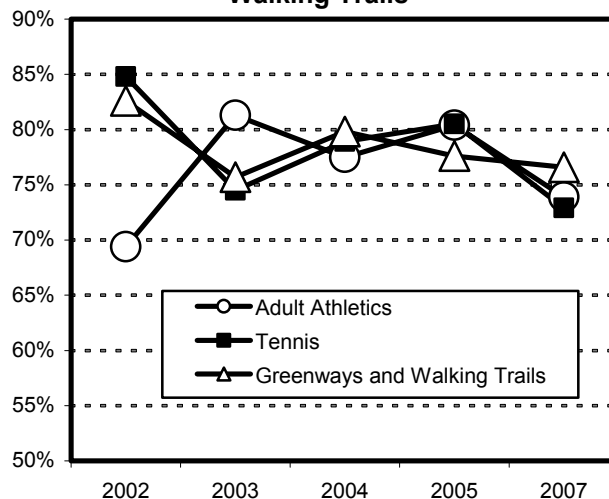
<sup>28</sup> The earlier 2001 Memphis Poll examined the priority of several smaller parks' programs. It showed that golf and tennis were low priorities. A suggestion for the next Memphis Poll is to ask citizens to rank the priority of each parks' program so that the division has some guidance on which programs to emphasize.

**Figure 7-7: Citizens' Perceptions of Golf Courses**



Next, the Poll examined citizens' perceptions of adult athletics, tennis courts, and greenways/walking trails. Figure 7-8 shows that all three services were slightly below 78 percent, which is the average for City services.

**Figure 7-8: Citizens' Perceptions of Adult Athletics, Tennis Courts, and Walking Trails**



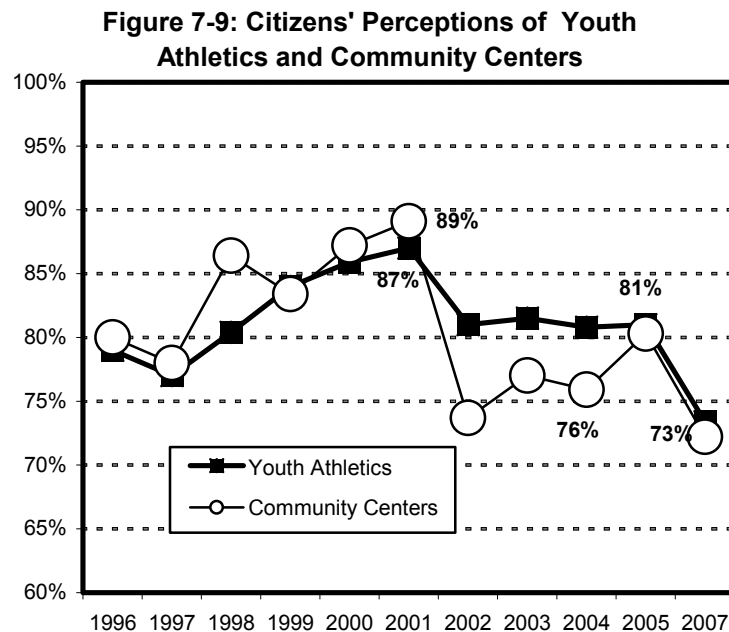
Adult athletics, which include softball, show a decline from 81 percent in 2003 to 74 percent in 2007. The division indicates that the program is no longer operating. Tennis has declined from 85 percent in 2002 to 73 percent in 2007.

Whites were more concerned about tennis courts than African Americans. Greenways and walking trails have also declined, from 83 percent in 2002 to 77 percent in 2007.

## Services for Children

The Memphis Poll examined services that were targeted towards children, but in some cases they also provided programs for adults and seniors. The trends declined in 2002, followed by stabilized ratings at the lower level for several years. The ratings in those stable years still placed many of the services for children at or above the average for all City services.

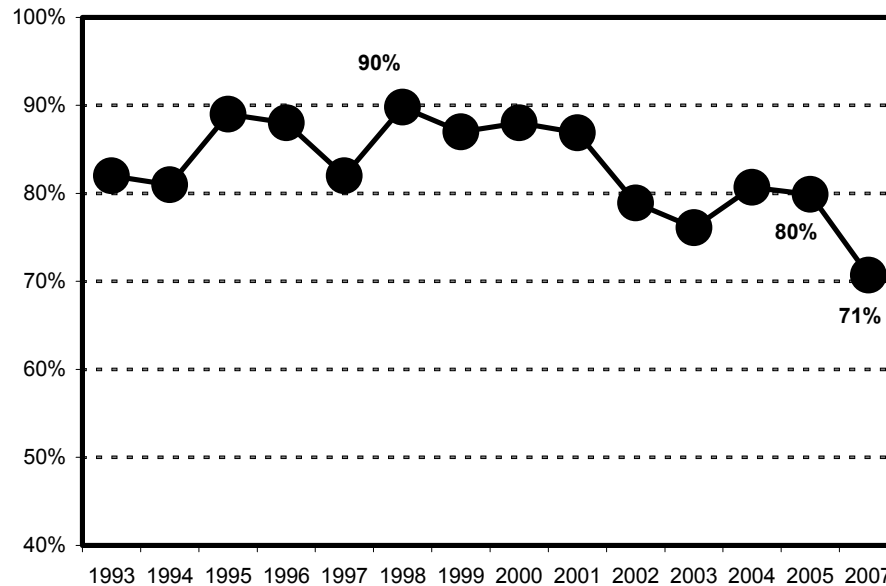
Figure 7-9 provides information for youth athletics and community centers.<sup>29</sup> The trends for these two services are very similar. These services showed overall improvement in the early years of the Poll and then in 2002 there was a pronounced drop in citizens' satisfaction of youth athletics and community centers. Ratings remained at this score (around 81 percent and 77 percent, respectively) from 2002 through 2005. However, both of these programs had precipitous declines again in 2007—a decline of 8 percent compared to 2005.



<sup>29</sup> The earlier 2002 Memphis Poll showed community centers to be a moderate priority for citizens, with ratings much higher than golf and tennis.

As shown in Figure 7-10, summer day camps have a slightly different pattern, but the overall results are similar.

**Figure 7-10: Citizens' Perceptions of Park Services'  
Summer Day Camps**



Between 1993 and 2001, citizens' ratings for summer day camps varied between 80 and 90 percent. In 2002 and 2003, the ratings for summer day camps fell below 80 percent for the first time, before recovering somewhat in 2004 and 2005. However, the ratings for summer day camps had a sharp decline from 80 percent in 2005 to 71 percent in 2007, a 9 percent decline.

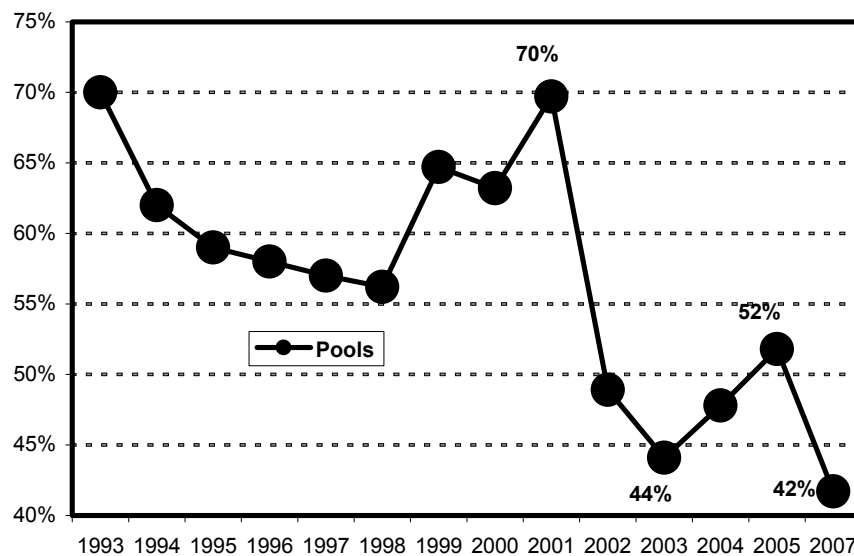
The findings about public swimming pools (called Aquatic Centers by the Division of Park Services) are the most problematic. Data shown in Figure 7-11 indicates a consistent and long-term decline in citizens' ratings from 1993 to 1998, when the ratings declined from 70 percent to 56 percent. During the three-year period from 1998 to 2001, there was an overall improvement from 56 percent to 70 percent. This period was followed by another sharp decline in citizen satisfaction over the next two years, before a slight recovery to 52 percent in 2005.

However, the ratings for public swimming pools showed a precipitous decline from 52 percent in 2005 to 42 percent in 2007.<sup>30</sup> Public swimming pools are among the lowest-rated of any City services.

<sup>30</sup> The pools have been long-term problems, as identified by the citizens in the Memphis Poll. In 1995, the Memphis Poll surveyed users of the pools. It found that half of users thought problems were related to pool facilities such as locker rooms and bathrooms, water cleanliness, and crowding. The next factor was public

Parks services staff suggested the problem was budgetary in not having funds to hire reliable temporary staff for the pools, which are open only a short period of time. Staff also thought that only the children who used the pools should be interviewed about the quality of the pools. The ratings for the pools are the second lowest of any service in the Memphis Poll. Although the ratings have varied over time, pools have consistently ranked among the lowest rated City services. It has been suggested that the Division of Park Services needs to conduct physical surveys of the pools during the summer. No such data currently exists.

**Figure 7-11: Citizens' Perceptions of Public Swimming Pools**



The ratings for programs serving children are distressing. Youth athletics, community centers, summer day camps, and public swimming pools all showed pronounced declines in citizens' ratings from 2005 and 2007. These programs are especially important because they have the potential for addressing both recreation and crime prevention. The latter was the highest citizens' priority in the 2007 Memphis Poll.

---

safety at 40 percent. Factors that were not important: lifeguards, other staff, water temperature, and hours of operation. The Poll has suggested that the Division needs to use an independent contractor to rate the actual conditions of the pools during their operation.

## **Key Findings**

- ❑ The overall ratings for the Division of Park Services showed a decline in 2007.
- ❑ Programs for children showed the most consistent decline among the Division of Park Services programs.
- ❑ The citizens rated public swimming pools as the second lowest service in the entire Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium showed a slight decline in ratings, but Chapter 3 showed it was also the citizens' lowest rated priority.
- ❑ The Zoo, Pink Palace Museum, and Botanic Garden continue to be highly rated and are among the elite City services.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Other Agencies**

#### **Memphis & Shelby County Health Department, Public Library and Information Center, Riverfront Development Corporation, and Memphis Light, Gas and Water**

This chapter discusses the citizens' perceptions of other agencies. Administration and/or funding of these agencies are shared with other entities. This section discusses the Memphis & Shelby County Health Department, the Public Library and Information Center, the Riverfront Development Corporation, and Memphis Light, Gas and Water.

#### **Health Department**

The Memphis and Shelby County Health Department (called Health Department in this report) is a joint City and County agency administered by the County. The City provides approximately half of the funding for the Health Department. The Health Department has an extensive mandate that includes providing environmental protection to the community, improving sanitation practices, and delivering health-related services. The health clinics were formerly administered by the Health Department, but have now been moved to the MED, which is the Shelby County public hospital. Although the health clinics are no longer within the purview of the Health Department, the Memphis Poll continued to ask citizens about these important services.

Figure 8-1 shows the results for the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department and the health clinics.

The highest tier of Health Department services in Figure 8-1 was providing vital records (such as birth and death certificates). Eighty-nine (89) percent of the citizens felt the Health Department was doing a good job in providing vital records.

The second tier services in Figure 8-1 were above 78 percent, the approval score for overall City services. The ratings were 84 percent for providing immunizations, 83 percent for health clinics, and 82 percent for restaurant

inspections. These services are effective and compare favorably with many services delivered directly by the City of Memphis. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans with providing immunizations.

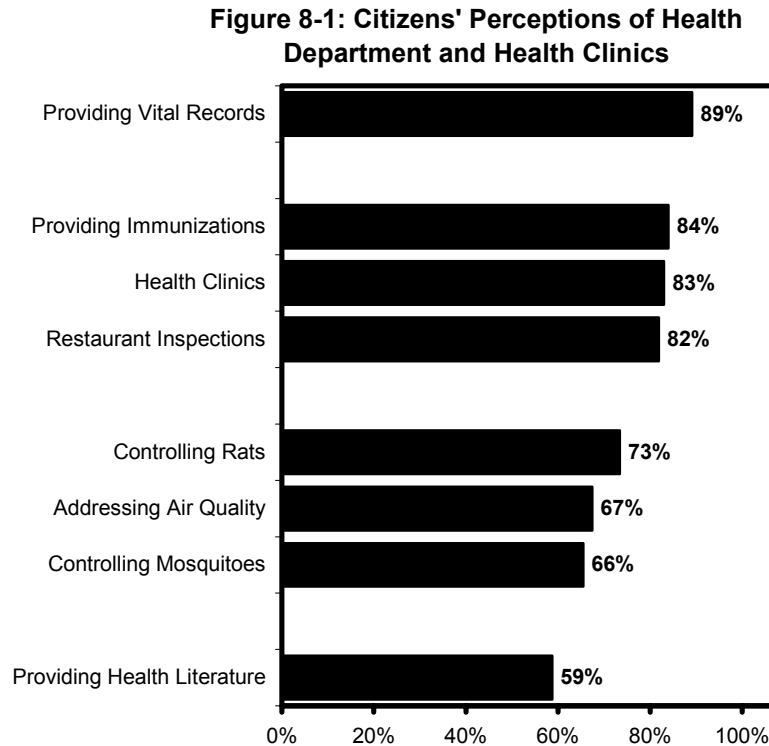


Figure 8-1 displays the third tier of services that are below average when compared to the overall City services approval ratings. Seventy-three (73) percent of the citizens were satisfied with controlling rats, 67 percent were satisfied with addressing air quality, and 66 percent were satisfied with controlling mosquitoes.

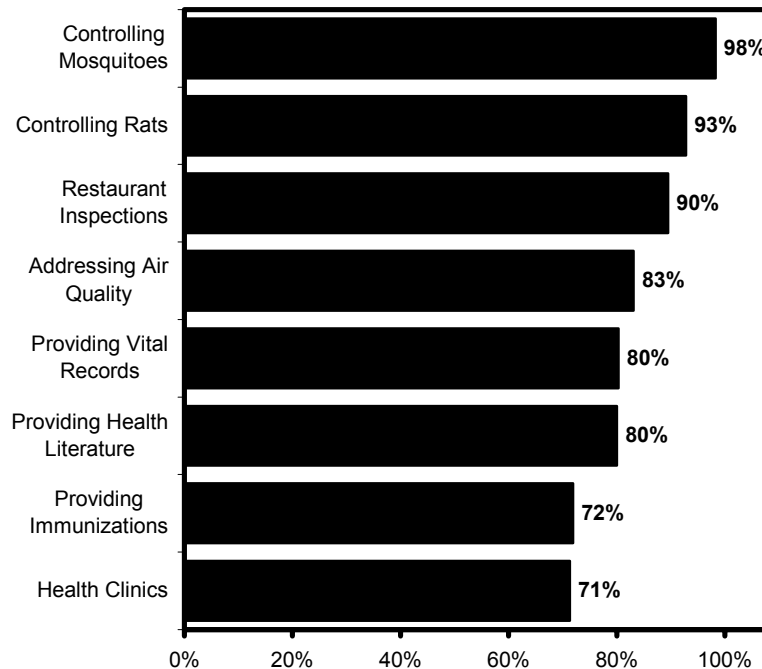
The lowest tier of Health Department services was far below average and included a single service—providing health education and disease prevention literature (59 percent).

Whites were less satisfied than African Americans with providing health education/disease prevention literature and addressing air quality.

Figure 8-2 provides the response rates for health services. A variation in response rates is proper since it reflects more or less familiarity with services.

Citizens were the most familiar with controlling mosquitoes and least familiar with public health clinics.

**Figure 8-2: Percent Responding to Questions on Quality of Health Department and Health Clinics**



## Trend Data for Health Department

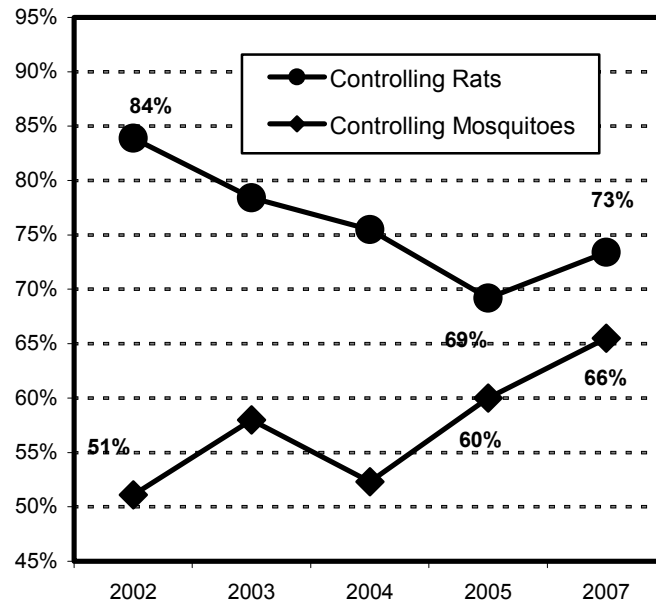
Next the Memphis Poll examined the trend data for the last four to five years during which these questions were asked. Figure 8-3 shows the citizens' perceptions of controlling rats within the City declined 15 percent from 2002 to 2005. There were deep budgetary cuts in the service and citizens recognized the declining quality of the service. The Health Department now has additional funds to use in services dealing with both rats and mosquitoes. As a result citizens saw a slight improvement in rat control from 69 percent in 2005 to 73 percent in 2007.

The Health Department is also responsible for controlling mosquitoes.<sup>31</sup> The Health Department feels that it has one of the nation's best programs, but the job of controlling mosquitoes is difficult given environmental and health conditions in Memphis. Figure 8-3 shows citizens' perceptions of the department's efforts to

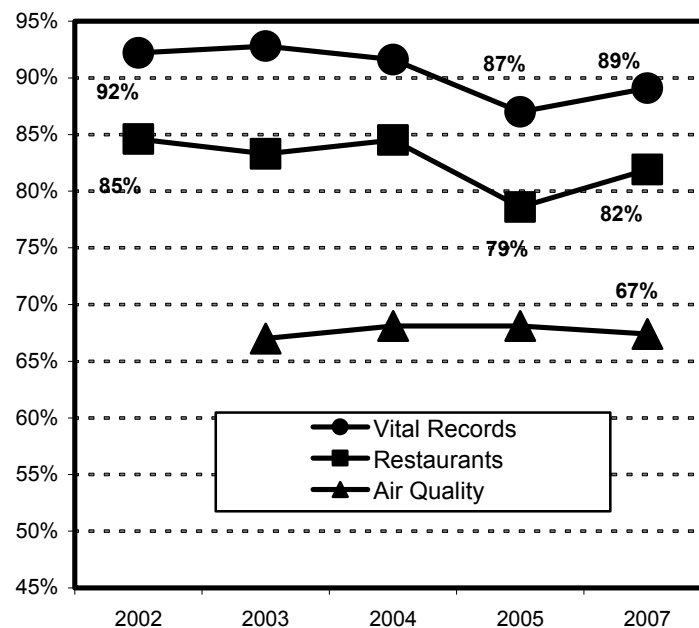
<sup>31</sup> The question specifically asked citizens about controlling mosquitoes and it did not ask about eliminating mosquitoes.

control mosquitoes. Overall, the rating for controlling mosquitoes has shown an improvement over the five years of the Memphis Poll during which this information has been collected. In 2002, 51 percent of the citizens were satisfied with controlling mosquitoes and by 2007 that result had increased to 66 percent.

**Figure 8-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Controlling Rats & Mosquitoes**



**Figure 8-4: Citizens' Perceptions of Restaurant Inspections, Providing Vital Records and Addressing Air Quality**

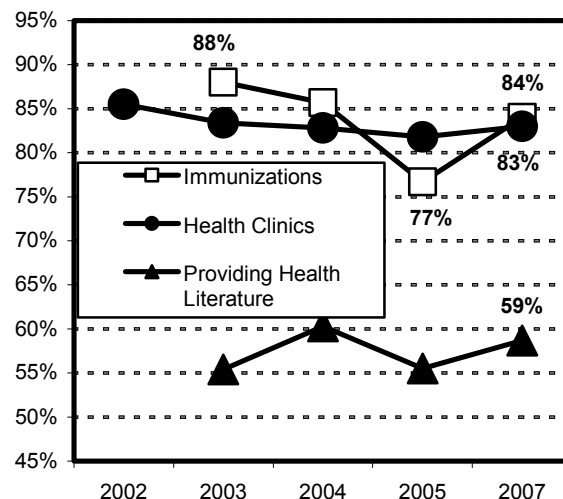


The Memphis Poll examined citizens' perceptions of providing vital records and restaurant inspections. Figure 8-4 shows that both of these services had a similar pattern of stable rankings from 2002 to 2007—both are above the overall average for City services.

Figure 8-4 also describes the citizens' perceptions of addressing air quality, another responsibility of the Health Department. The results for air quality are similar for all four years of the Memphis Poll during which the question has been asked. The 2007 score of 67 percent is considerably below the average score for City services, which is 78 percent.

The Health Department provides immunizations and immunization records. Figure 8-5 provides trend information on the four years in which the Memphis Poll has examined this service. In 2003, 88 percent of the citizens were satisfied with immunizations, but by 2005 that had declined to 77 percent. This sharp decline may be due to the flu vaccine shortage that year, which was outside of the City's control. The results for 2007 improved and place immunizations above the overall average for City services.

**Figure 8-5: Citizens' Perceptions of Health Clinics, Health Literature, and Immunizations**



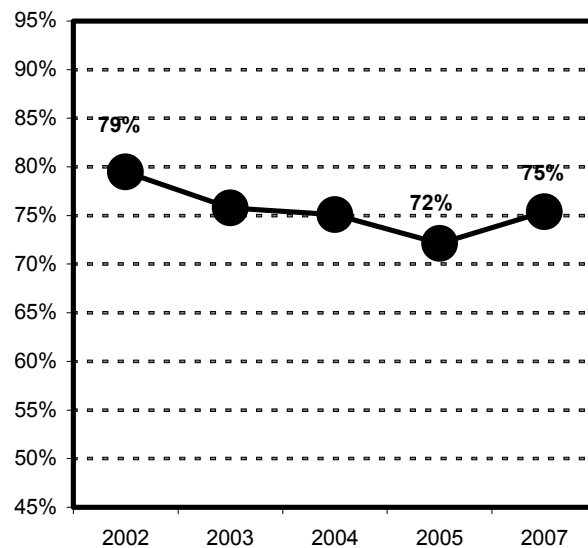
The administration of health clinics moved from the Health Department to the MED. The Poll continued to ask citizens to rate their satisfaction with the quality of health care at the health clinics. Figure 8-5 shows the ratings declined incrementally over the first four years for which the Memphis Poll has been

collecting this information. However, the decline was very small and with a slight increase in the current Poll the rating for health clinics still remains above the City services average.

The Health Department also distributes health education and disease prevention literature. Figure 8-5 shows stable ratings over the four years in which the information was collected, albeit at a rate well below the average for overall City services.

Finally, Figure 8-6 shows the average scores for all of the combined health services. These services included both the Health Department services and the health clinics. The results confirm the findings of the individual trend lines, that overall, the services of the Health Department were incrementally declining from 2002 to 2005. However, the results for 2007 show a slight increase in the overall rating.

**Figure 8-6: Overall Citizens' Perceptions of Health Programs**

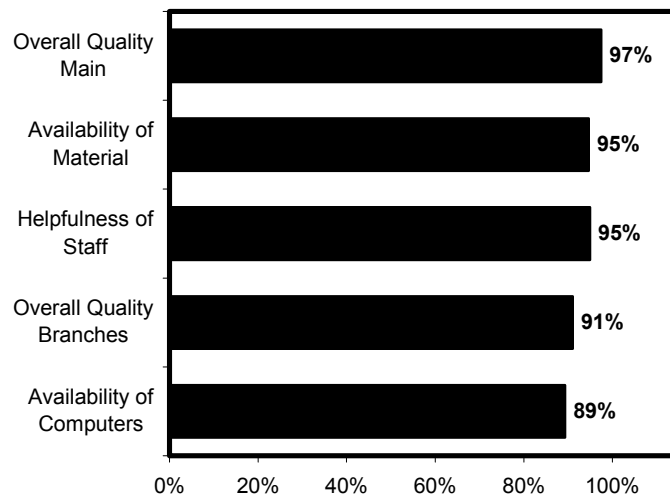


## **Public Library and Information Center**

Public libraries are an important component of the City's public services. The public libraries include the central library, branches, and several outreach activities. For simplicity, the terminology "public libraries" is used for the Memphis Public Library and Information Center. Starting in 2005 the system was managed by the Division of Public Services.

The public libraries have been consistently rated among the very highest services provided by the City of Memphis.<sup>32</sup> Figure 8-7 shows the rankings for the overall quality of the main library (97 percent), the availability of materials (95 percent), the helpfulness of the staff (95 percent), overall quality of branches (91 percent), and availability of computers (89 percent). The average score of all these services was 93 percent. These ratings place the public libraries among the elite of City services. The results for 2003, the last year in which the libraries were studied, were very similar to this year's results.

**Figure 8-7: Citizens' Perceptions of Public Libraries**



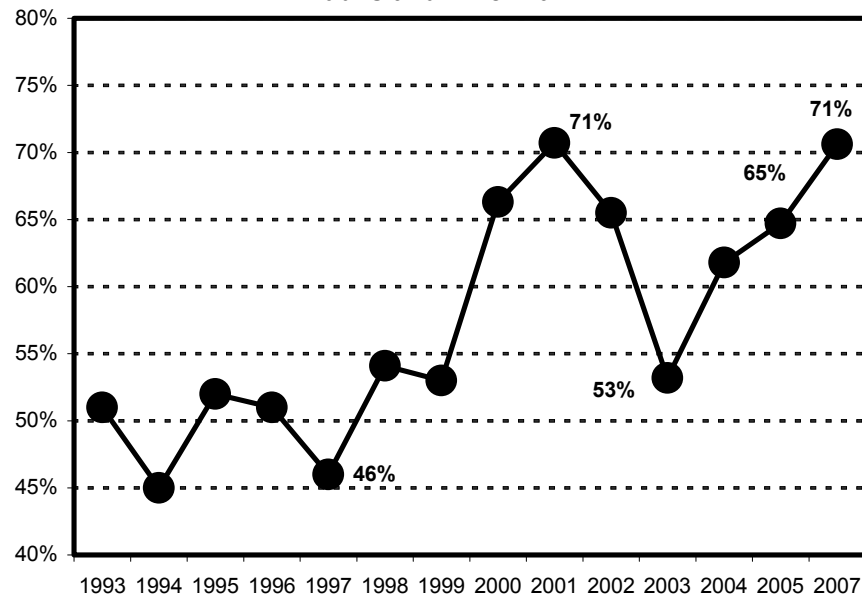
## Riverfront Development Corporation

The Riverfront Development Corporation, also another agency, operates Mud Island River Park. It is a nonprofit agency charged with maintaining and developing the riverfront. It receives considerable funding from the City of Memphis.

The Memphis Division of Park Services' administration of Mud Island River Park was reflected in Memphis Polls from 1993 to 2001. Figure 8-8 shows that from 1993 to 1999 its ratings were very low with scores below 55 percent. However, Mud Island River Park had improvements in ratings from 1999 to 2001. The citizens' satisfaction with the park reached a high of 71 percent in 2001.

<sup>32</sup> The response rates for these questions were: library materials (90 percent), helpfulness of staff (88 percent), library branches (85 percent), main library (84 percent), and availability of computers (81 percent).

**Figure 8-8: Citizens' Perceptions of  
Mud Island River Park**



The Riverfront Development Corporation's administration of Mud Island River Park began after the 2001 Memphis Poll. The Poll asked citizens if the corporation was doing a good job of administering the park. The ratings from 2001 to 2003 showed a sharp decline from 71 percent to 53 percent during this early period of Riverfront Development Corporation's administration of the park.

More recent Polls showed that citizens were more impressed with the park. In the current Poll, 71 percent of the citizens again thought the Riverfront Development Corporation was doing a good job.<sup>33</sup> This was an 18 percent increase in satisfaction from the 2003 Memphis Poll.

## **Memphis Light, Gas and Water**

Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) is considered a City of Memphis Division, even though it has an independent board. Mayor W.W. Herenton has made efforts to incorporate the division into the City's administrative structure. The 2003 Memphis Poll included questions about MLGW for the first time.

<sup>33</sup> The response rate for this question on Mud Island was 65 percent.



Figure 8-9 shows citizens' perceptions of MLGW services in 2007.<sup>34</sup> Two service measures were rated very highly: the quality of drinking water (92) percent and the courtesy<sup>35</sup> of field workers in the citizens' neighborhoods (90 percent). Both of these services rank among the City's elite. Figure 8-10 shows that these results have been consistently high for all three years in which the Memphis Poll has examined these two services.

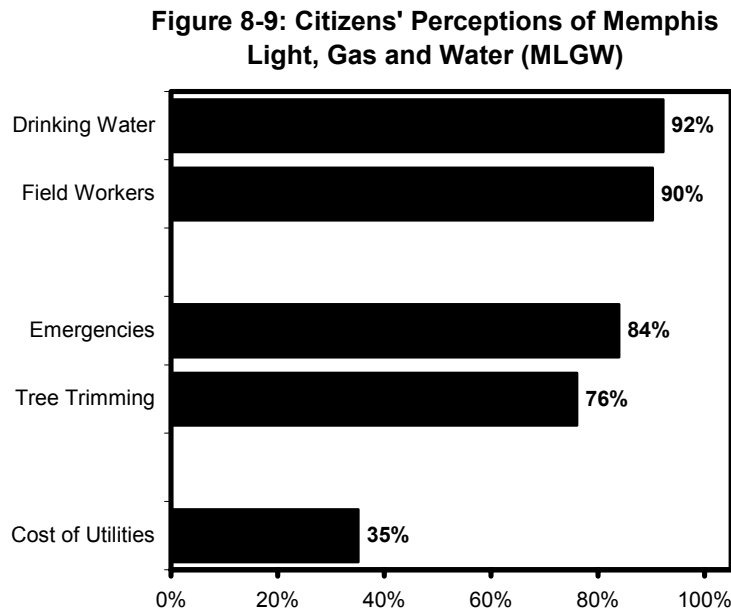


Figure 8-9 also shows that in 2007, 84 percent of the citizens felt MLGW was doing a good job of responding to gas and electric emergencies in their neighborhoods. This result is higher than the average score for overall City services. Figure 8-10 shows that the score in 2007 is a slight improvement from 2005.

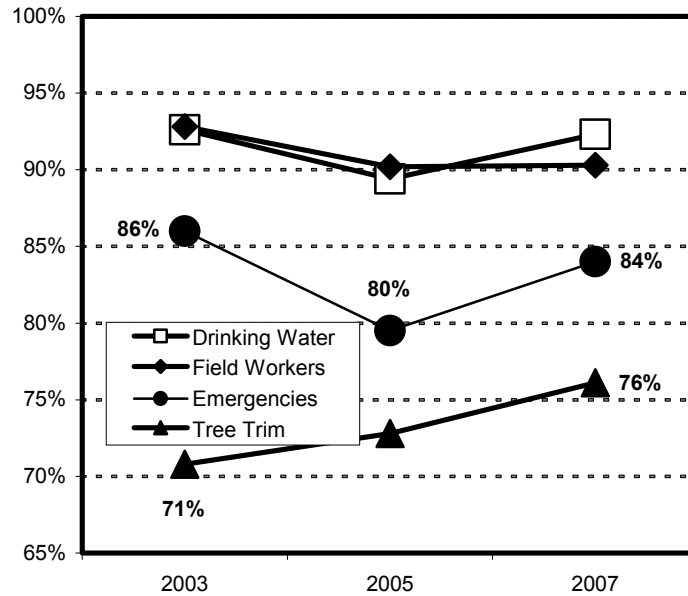
Seventy-six (76) percent of the citizens thought the City was doing a good job with their tree trimming service. Figure 8-10 shows that this finding was an incremental improvement since 2003.

In sharp contrast, citizens showed a lack of confidence in MLGW's cost of utilities. Figure 8-9 shows that only 35 percent were satisfied with this service. The result places the cost of utilities as the lowest-rated service in the 2007 Memphis Poll. Figure 8-11 provides trend information about the cost of utilities.

<sup>34</sup> The response rates for these questions were: drinking water (99 percent), cost of utilities (98 percent), tree trimming (93 percent), emergencies (92 percent), and field workers (90 percent).

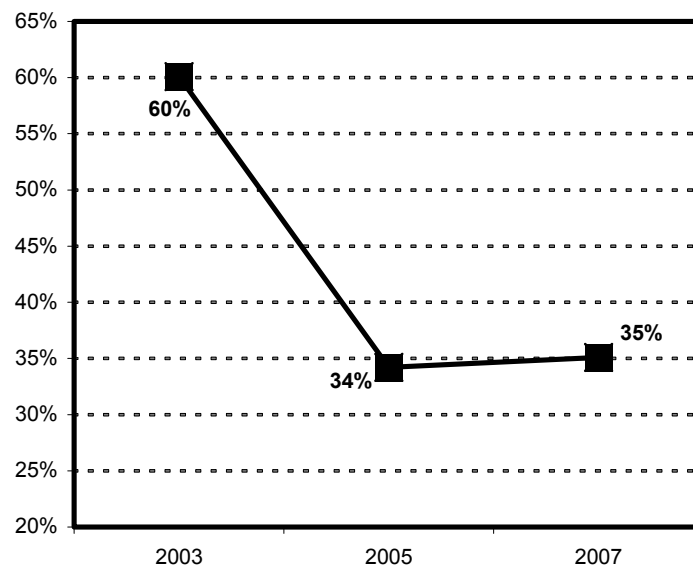
<sup>35</sup> The question asked if the office was courteous *and attentive* during their call for service.

**Figure 8-10: Citizens' Perceptions of Selected MLGW Services**



In 2003, 60 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the cost of utilities. That result plunged to 34 percent in 2005 and increased one percent in 2007.<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 8-11: Citizens' Perceptions of MLGW's Performance in Cost of Utilities**



Some City officials that have seen the results for the cost of utilities have wondered if they were determined by socioeconomic conditions. In other words,

<sup>36</sup> MLGW officials feel they are doing an excellent job with cost of utilities and that public perceptions are not accurate.

City officials speculated that lower income residents would be the least satisfied with the cost of utilities and therefore may have skewed the results downward. Because information on respondents' incomes is not collected, there are two alternative ways to examine this issue. African Americans in general have a lower median income than whites.<sup>37</sup> The results show that African Americans were more concerned than whites about the cost of utilities—a 24 percent difference. In addition, the sections of the City as a whole reflect socioeconomic differences. Figure 8-12 shows two affluent areas, Fareast and Eastside had the highest positive scores for cost of utilities. The three least affluent areas—Northwest, Northside and Southwest had the lowest positive scores. These findings confirm that socioeconomic conditions do affect the results somewhat. However, even in the most affluent areas only half of the citizens thought MLGW was responsibly controlling the cost of utilities.

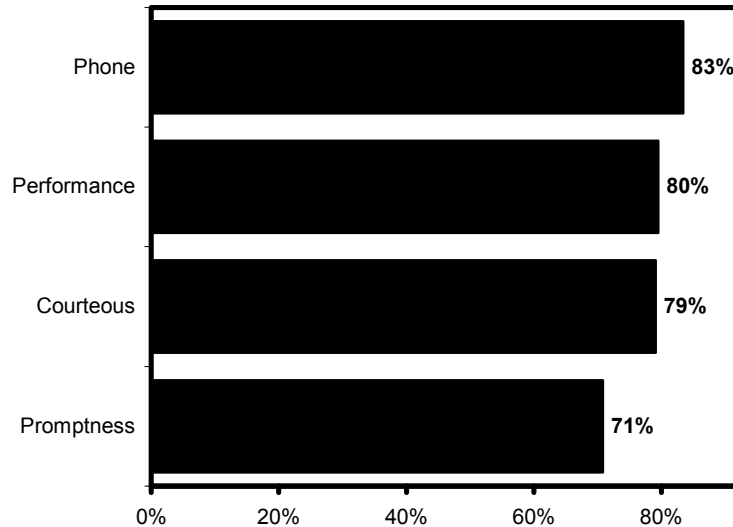
**Figure 8-12: Percent Citizens that Thought MLGW Did a Good Job with the Cost of Utilities By Section of City**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Percent 2007</b>
<b>Fareast</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Eastside</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Midtown</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Southeast</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Southside</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Downtown</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Southcentral</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Northside</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>24%</b>

The Memphis Poll also asked if citizens had contacted MLGW. A substantial percentage of citizens, 34 percent, contacted MLGW, which made it the City division most contacted by citizens. Figure 8-13 shows the quality of that contacting experience from the citizens' perspectives. The citizens' ratings were 83 percent for phone professionalism, 80 percent for performance by solving the problem, 79 percent for courtesy and 71 percent for promptness.

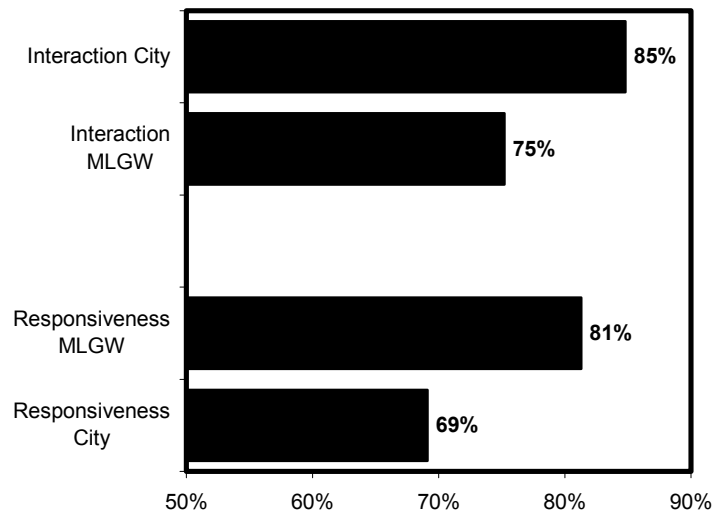
<sup>37</sup> According to the 2000 census, median income in Memphis was \$41,112 for whites and \$26,860 for African Americans. According to the 2000 census, the percent below the poverty level in Memphis was 8.9 percent for whites and 27.1 percent for African Americans.

**Figure 8-13: Citizens' Perceptions of Contacting Memphis Light, Gas and Water**



The Memphis Poll next examined how these ratings compared to other services that involved citizens contacting City Hall. Figure 8-14 compares the citizens' experiences contacting MLGW to that of contacting the City using two measures—interaction and responsiveness. Interaction is defined as the average of phone professionalism and courteousness, while responsiveness is the average of performance and promptness.

**Figure 8-14: Contacting MLGW Compared to Contacting City**



As shown in Figure 8-14, the City's ratings were higher for interaction—85 percent compared to 75 percent for MLGW.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, MLGW received higher ratings for responsiveness—81 percent compared to 69 percent for other City agencies. The mixed findings suggest that the responses to contacting were about the same—whether the service was provided by MLGW or a conventional City agency.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Health Department services saw small but perceptible improvements in the ratings for most of its services.
- ❑ The Public Library and Information Center continues to be one of the highest-rated agencies in the Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Mud Island River Park continued to show consistent improvement in its services.
- ❑ One of the “stunning” findings in the 2007 Memphis Poll was the exceptionally low rating for citizens’ satisfaction with the cost of utilities provided by MLGW—this was partially due to socioeconomic factors.

---

<sup>38</sup> These data suggest that MLGW officials should examine ways of improving customer services for interaction, which includes phone professionalism and courtesy.

## Chapter 9

# Neighborhood Concerns

This chapter examines citizens' perceptions of their neighborhoods and specific concerns related to the physical conditions within their neighborhoods.

The next several chapters provide information to carry out the priority that the Herenton Administration places on improving the City's neighborhoods. In his inauguration address for his third term, Mayor W.W. Herenton promised to rebuild Memphis neighborhoods. He called for a citywide renaissance to create strong neighborhoods saying, "Strong neighborhoods make for a strong city." On New Year's Day 2005, Mayor Herenton talked about a rebirth of the City's neighborhoods, saying "I believe a city is comprised of bright, vibrant neighborhoods."<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 9-1: Optimism about Overall Neighborhood Quality**

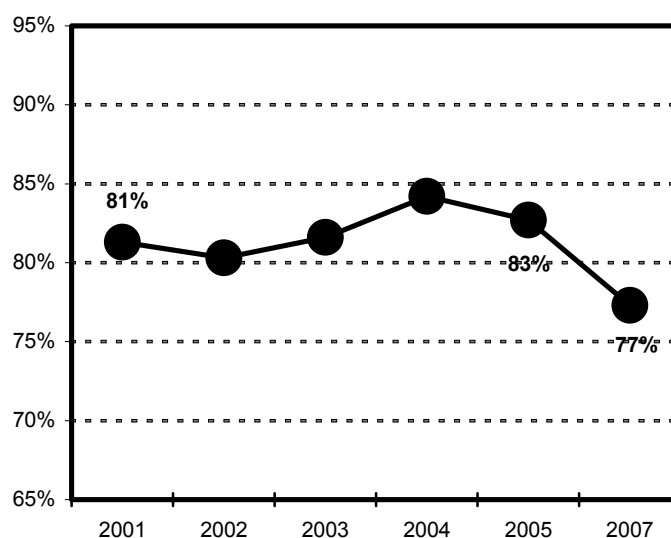


Figure 9-1 shows that 77 percent of Memphians thought their neighborhoods would be the same or better in one year. The response to this question shows a decline in the citizens' optimism about their neighborhoods.<sup>40</sup>

The Memphis Poll was able to examine citizens' optimism about neighborhoods by examining geographic sections of the City. Figure 9-2 shows that the most

<sup>39</sup> Bill Dries, "Herenton promises to rebuild neighborhoods," *The Commercial Appeal*, January 2, 2000 and Jacinthia Jones, "Mayor lists successes, challenges for city," *The Commercial Appeal*, January 1, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> The response rate for this question on neighborhoods was 97 percent.

optimistic areas of the City were Midtown and Downtown. The moderately optimistic areas were Southside, Eastside, Southwest and Fareast. The citizens were least optimistic in Southeast, Southcentral, Northwest, Northeast and Northside.

**Figure 9-2: Percent Citizens  
Optimistic About Their  
Neighborhoods By Area of the City**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Midtown</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Downtown</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Southside</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Eastside</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Fareast</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Northside</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Southcentral</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Southeast</b>	<b>65%</b>

## **An Overview of Neighborhood Physical Problems**

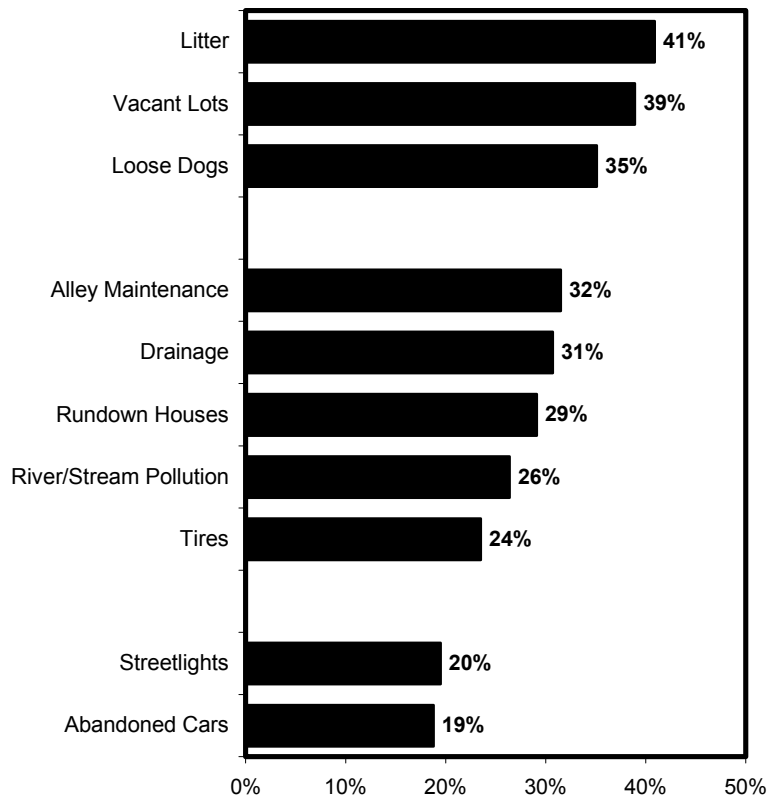
This section examines physical problems in the citizens' neighborhoods. Physical problems included litter on streets, dogs running loose, drainage after rain storms, inadequate street lights, trash or weeds on vacant lots, rundown houses, abandoned cars and trucks, tires left on the street for more than two weeks, pollution in rivers and streams, and maintenance of City alleys,<sup>41</sup> The citizens were asked by the Memphis Poll to indicate whether these issues were problems in their neighborhoods.

Figure 9-3 shows the levels of citizens' concerns about specific physical conditions in their neighborhoods. Litter on neighborhood streets (41 percent), trash and litter on vacant lots (39 percent), and dogs running loose (35 percent) were the greatest concerns of the citizens. These results suggest that litter on streets and in vacant lots, followed by loose dogs were three neighborhood conditions with widespread concerns.

---

<sup>41</sup> The response rates for these questions were: litter (100 percent), drainage (100 percent), rundown houses (100 percent), loose dogs (100 percent), abandoned cars (99 percent), streetlights (99 percent), vacant lots (98 percent), tires (98 percent), river/stream pollution (86 percent), and alley maintenance (75 percent).

**Figure 9-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Physical Conditions as Neighborhood Problems**



The next tier of concerns about physical conditions ranged from 24 to 32 percent. The concerns in this tier included maintenance of City alleys (32 percent), drainage after rainstorms (31 percent), rundown houses (29 percent), river/stream pollution (26 percent), and tires left on streets for more than two weeks (24 percent).

The lowest levels of concerns included streetlights (20 percent) and abandoned cars (19 percent).

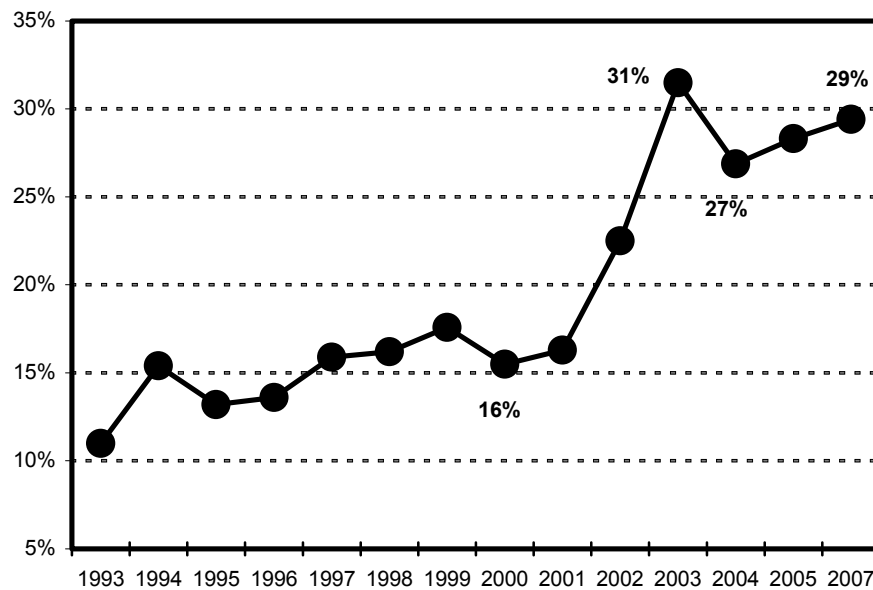
## **Trend Data**

Figure 9-4 shows the average score for citizens' concerns about physical conditions for each year of the Memphis Poll. Physical conditions were not widespread concerns until 2002, hovering around 15 percent before that time. However, the level of concerns drastically increased between 2001 and 2003, reaching a historic high in 2003. Figure 9-4 shows that overall concerns have sustained this higher level for the last four years of the Poll.



The Memphis Poll also examined concerns about physical conditions by sections of the City in Figure 9-5. Five areas of the City were the most concerned about physical conditions, with scores ranging from 32 to 38 percent. These areas included Southside (38 percent), Downtown (37 percent), Southwest (36 percent), Northwest (33 percent), and Southcentral (32 percent).

**Figure 9-4: Overall Trend About Concerns with Neighborhood Physical Problems**



Five areas had moderate levels of concern ranging from 22 percent to 29 percent. The areas were Northside (29 percent), Midtown (28 percent), Southeast (26 percent), Northeast (23 percent), and Eastside (22 percent).

The tier with the lowest levels of concern included only Fareast. The score for Fareast was 16 percent.

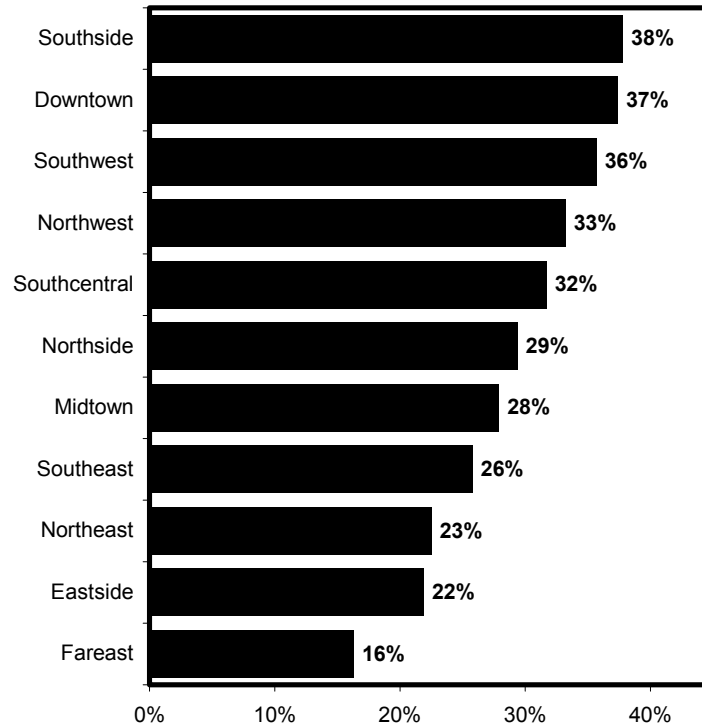
## Race and Physical Conditions

The Memphis Poll asked ten questions about physical conditions in the citizens' neighborhoods. African Americans were more concerned than whites about seven of those physical conditions.<sup>42</sup> The conditions which met this criterion are described in Figure 9-6 and include loose dogs (19 percent), abandoned cars (16

<sup>42</sup> The reader will recall that the Memphis Poll reports response differences between African Americans and whites that are 10 percent or greater.

percent), alley maintenance (16 percent), vacant lots (15 percent), tires left on the street for more than two weeks (14 percent), rundown houses (13 percent), and inadequate street lights (11 percent).

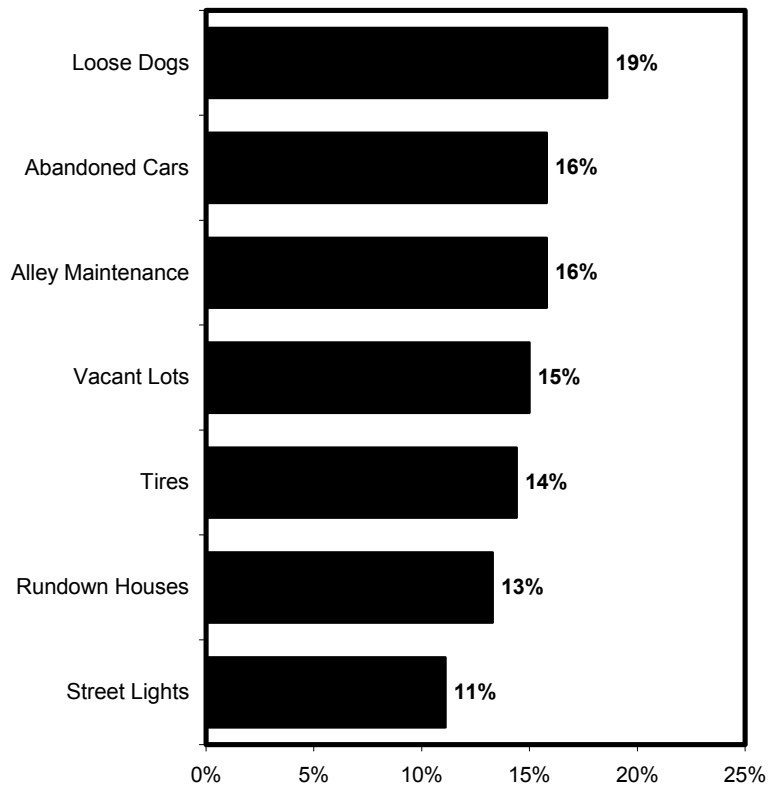
**Figure 9-5: Average Score for Concerns About Physical Conditions by Area of the City**



Three of the conditions did not meet the ten percent threshold to demonstrate differences between African Americans and whites. Those conditions were litter on neighborhood streets, drainage after rains, and pollution in rivers and streams.

The results in this chapter show that citizens are very concerned about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods. The next chapters will examine citizens' perceptions of the agencies that deal with these issues.

**Figure 9-6: Physical Conditions  
Differences for African Americans and Whites**



### **Key Findings about Neighborhood Physical Conditions**

- ❑ Memphians were optimistic about their neighborhoods, but the results suggested that there might be some incremental decline in those perceptions.
- ❑ Citizens continued to be concerned about the physical conditions within their neighborhoods.
- ❑ Citizens were most concerned about litter on streets, vacant lots, and loose dogs.
- ❑ One of the troubling findings of the Poll was the disparity between African Americans and whites in their perceptions of the physical conditions in their neighborhoods.

# **Chapter 10**

## **Division of Housing and Community Development**

### **And Other Agencies Involved in Neighborhood Revitalization**

This chapter examines the neighborhood revitalization services that are related to the physical conditions discussed in Chapter 9. It also examines the divisions of City government that have specific components that address the physical conditions of neighborhoods. There may be some redundancy in this chapter since discussions of problems overlap several of the divisions.

The Division of Housing and Community Development is primarily responsible for neighborhood revitalization. Several other agencies are also involved in neighborhood revitalization, including the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods, Executive Division (Mayor's Citizen Service Center and Center for Neighborhoods), Division of General Services, and the Office of Planning and Development.

This chapter is troubling because of the concerns citizens have about high levels of crime (Chapter 4) and problematic physical conditions (Chapter 9) in their neighborhoods. Chapter 2 also suggests that fewer citizens were planning to move within the City. However, Chapter 3 suggests that the citizens did not see neighborhood revitalization programs as a high priority for the City.

### **Division of Housing and Community Development**

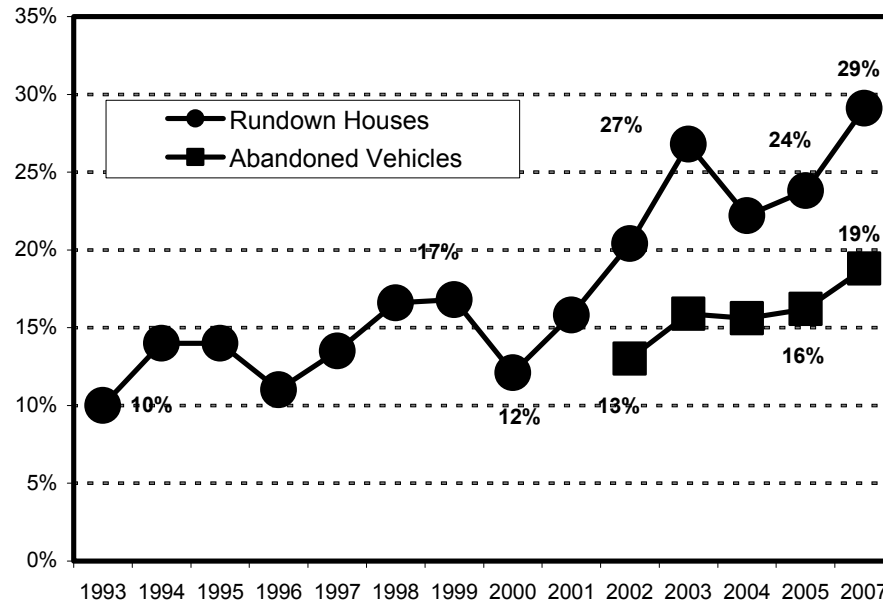
The Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the lead agency for providing and improving housing in the City's neighborhoods.<sup>43</sup> The division administers code enforcement that deals with dilapidated houses and abandoned vehicles. In addition, the Division of Housing and Community Development provides support for neighborhood economic development.

---

<sup>43</sup> Although not formally joined, the same director administers both the Division of Housing and Community Development and the Memphis Housing Authority.

This division has responsibility for several issues related to physical conditions of the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 10-1 shows citizens' concerns about rundown houses in their neighborhoods. Twenty-four (24) percent of citizens expressed concerns about rundown houses in 2005. The level of concerns increased 5 percent with a score of 29 percent in 2007, which is the highest in the history of the Poll.

**Figure 10-1: Citizens Concerns About Physical Conditions—Responsibilities of HCD**



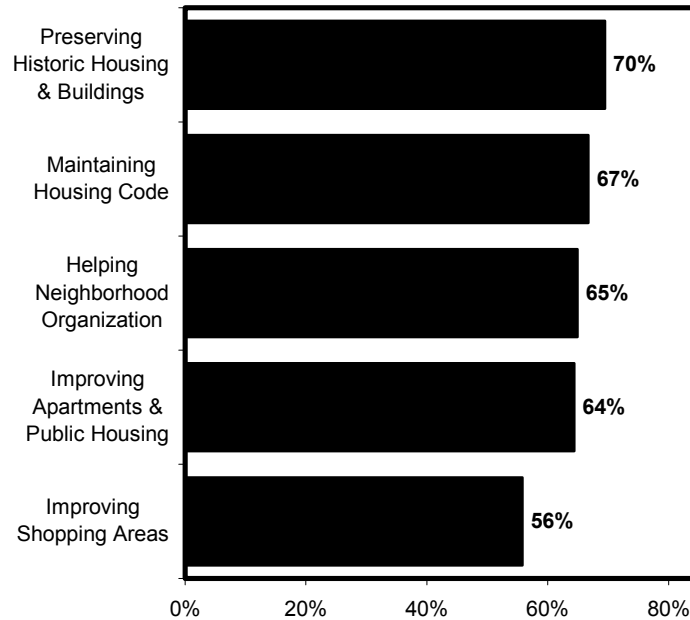
The Memphis Poll also asked about abandoned vehicles in the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 10-1 indicates that 19 percent of the citizens expressed concerns about abandoned vehicles. Concerns about abandoned vehicles have shown marginal increases since this issue was first included in the Poll.

The levels of concern for each of the following physical conditions provide the context for understanding the perceptions of the division's services.<sup>44</sup> Figure 10-2 shows the citizens' ratings of neighborhood revitalization services related to the Division of Housing and Community Development. Overall, citizens thought these efforts were mediocre. Seventy (70) percent of the citizens thought that the City was doing a good job in preserving historic housing and buildings, 67 percent thought they were doing a good job maintaining housing codes, 65 percent thought they were doing a good job helping out neighborhood organizations, 64 percent thought they were doing a good job improving

<sup>44</sup> The response rates for these questions were: historic housing (53 percent), housing code (90 percent), neighborhood organizations (73 percent), public housing (65 percent), and shopping areas (81 percent).

apartments and public housing, and 56 percent thought they were doing a good job improving shopping areas. All of these services have low ratings compared to the overall average of 78 percent for City services.

**Figure 10-2: Neighborhood Services Provided by Division of Housing and Community Development**



**Figure 10-3: Trends in Neighborhood Services Provided by the Division of Housing and Community Development**

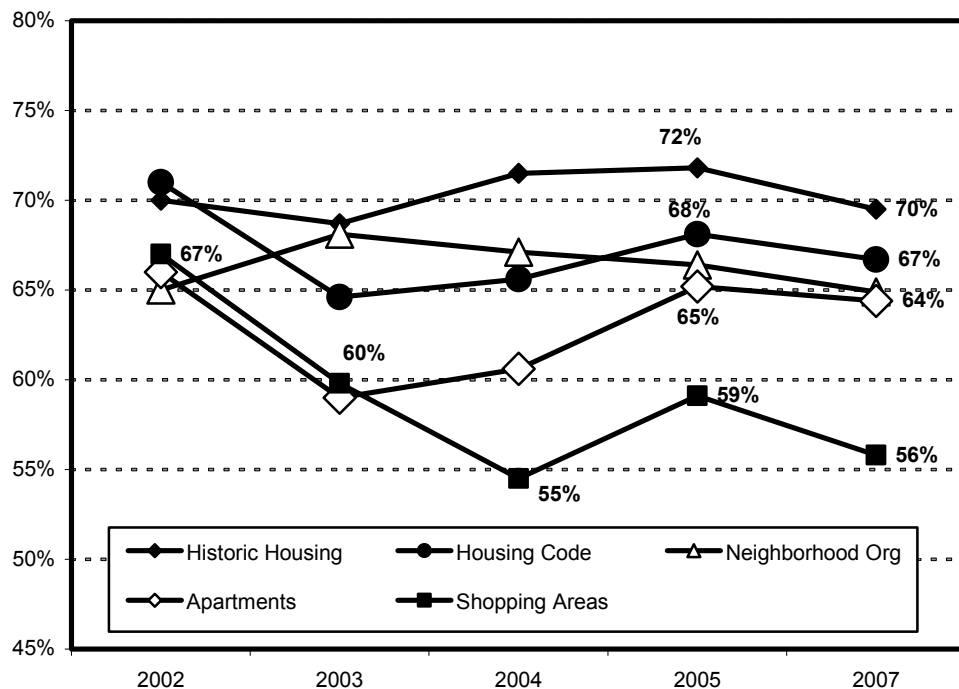


Figure 10-3 provides trend data for the five years of the Memphis Poll in which these services have been examined. The trend lines appear to have a similar pattern for many of the services. Services were at or near their highest level in 2002, the first year in which this information was collected. Then, a decline over one to two years occurred, followed by an improvement from 2004 to 2005 for most. The ratings for 2007 are at a slightly lower level than in 2005 for all of the services.

The Division of Housing and Community Development manages the code enforcement agency of City government. This agency was located in the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods in 2004. Code enforcement responds to citizens' complaints about both abandoned vehicles and rundown houses. The Memphis Poll examined citizens' satisfaction for the responsiveness of code enforcement. Responsiveness refers to the combined measure of responding quickly to the citizens' concerns and solving the problems.

Figure 10-4 provides the results for complaints about abandoned vehicles. Responsiveness for abandoned vehicles improved from 83 percent in 2004 to 87 percent in 2005, before declining to 80 percent in 2007. However, this result still places the responsiveness for abandoned vehicles above the 78 percent overall average for City services.

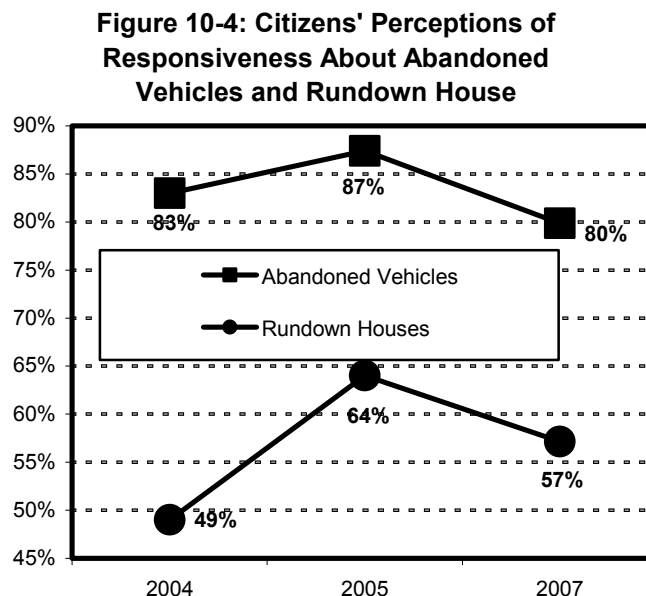


Figure 10-4 provides the results for complaints about rundown houses. Responsiveness for rundown houses improved from 49 percent in 2004 to 64 percent in 2005. However it declined to 57 percent in 2007. Both performance by

resolving the problem and promptness were responsible for the decline in responsiveness.

## Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods

The Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods administers the Animal Shelter that addresses loose dogs in neighborhoods. It no longer administers the Center for Neighborhoods, housing code enforcement, and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center.

**Figure 10-5: Concerns About Loose Dogs—Area of Responsibility for Public Services**

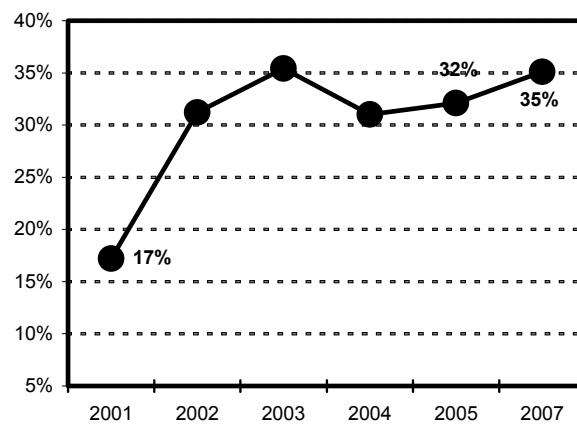


Figure 10-5 provides information about a physical problem that is the responsibility of the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods. Thirty-five (35) percent of the citizens were concerned about loose dogs. This result was an 18 percent increase in concerns compared to the 2001 Memphis Poll. The results for 2002 to 2007 were stable, staying in a range of 31 to 35 percent.

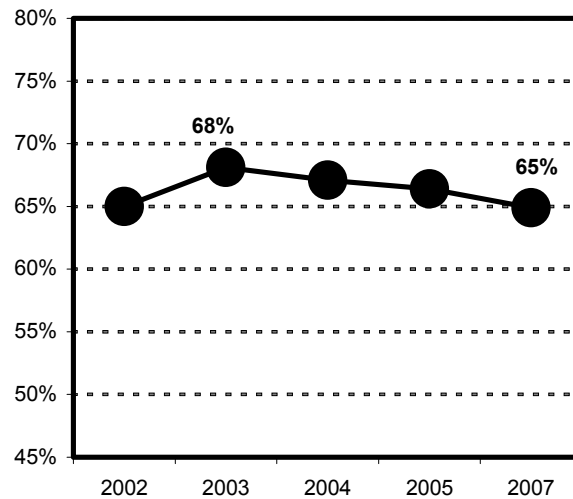
## Executive Division

The Executive Division is now responsible for the Center for Neighborhoods and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC). These were formerly under the management of the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods.

The Center for Neighborhoods says that its job is to "organize and support neighborhood groups". Figure 10-6 shows that only 65 percent of the citizens thought the City was doing a good job of helping neighborhood organizations. The trend data also appear to be showing an incremental, though small decline in the ratings.



**Figure 10-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Helping Neighborhood Organizations**



The Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC) receives complaints from citizens and forwards those complaints to the appropriate agency. Complaints to the City come both to the MCSC and directly to the agencies.

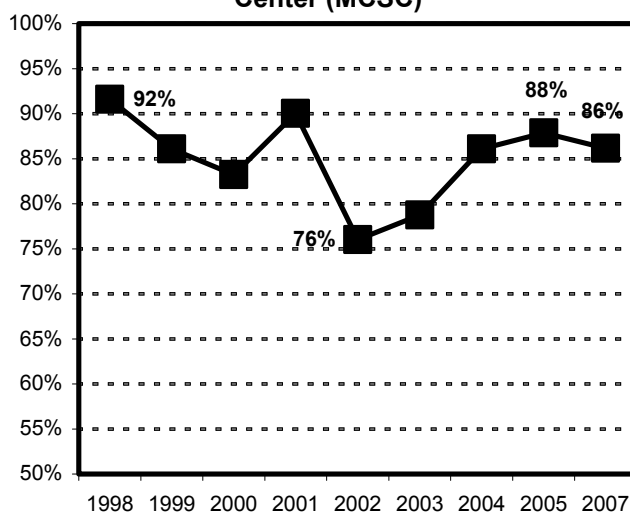
The Poll examined the interaction component for the Mayor's Citizen Service Center since its main task is to deal with citizens who call City Hall. Interaction includes phone professionalism and courtesy.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 10-7 shows that there has been some change in citizens' assessment of interaction with the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. The data reflected ratings of at least 90 percent in both 1998 and 2001. However, the ratings decreased to 76 percent in 2002, a 14 percent decline compared to 2001.

The Mayor's Citizen Service Center then showed an improvement in its ratings from 2002 to 2005 with an 88 percent score in 2005. However, the rating for interaction declined slightly in 2007 to 86 percent. Chapter 12 provides more information about the Mayor's Citizen Service Center, including comparisons of its ratings to those of other agencies.

<sup>45</sup> The question asked if the office was courteous *and attentive* during their call for service.

**Figure 10-7: Citizens' Perceptions of Interaction by Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC)**



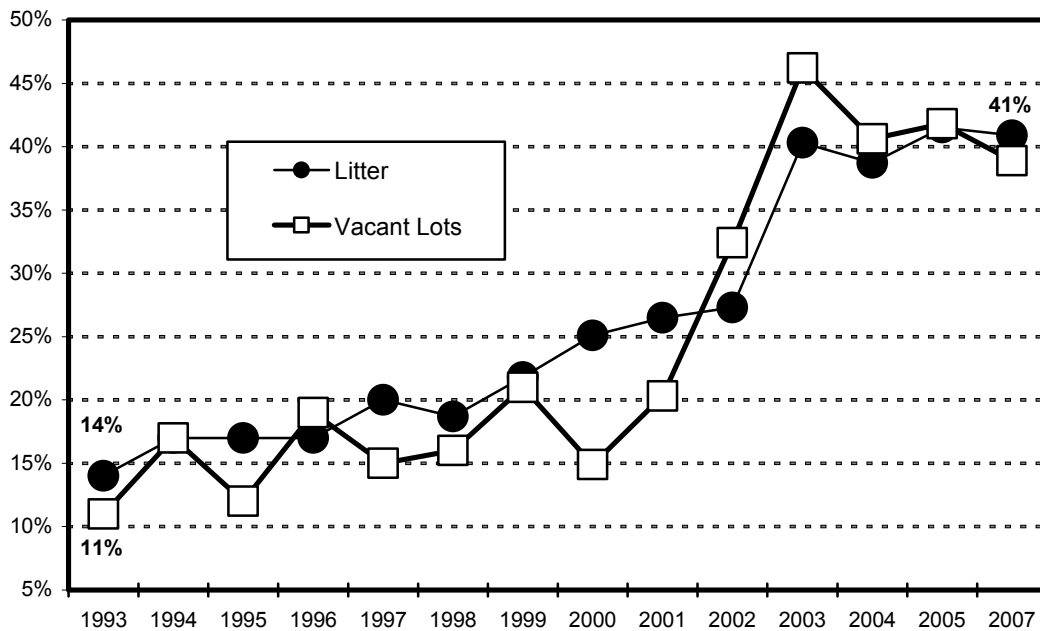
## Division of General Services

The Division of General Services maintains programs that focus on City and neighborhood cleanliness and beautification. It is involved in street sweeping and mowing vacant lots. It also administers the City Beautiful Commission, which receives both private and public funds to improve the physical appearance of the City.

The 2007 Memphis Poll provided information about two neighborhood conditions related to the work of the Division of General Services—trash and weeds on vacant lots, and litter on streets. The division maintains a weed office that mows vacant lots with high weeds. In addition, the City Beautiful Commission has long been concerned about litter on neighborhood streets.

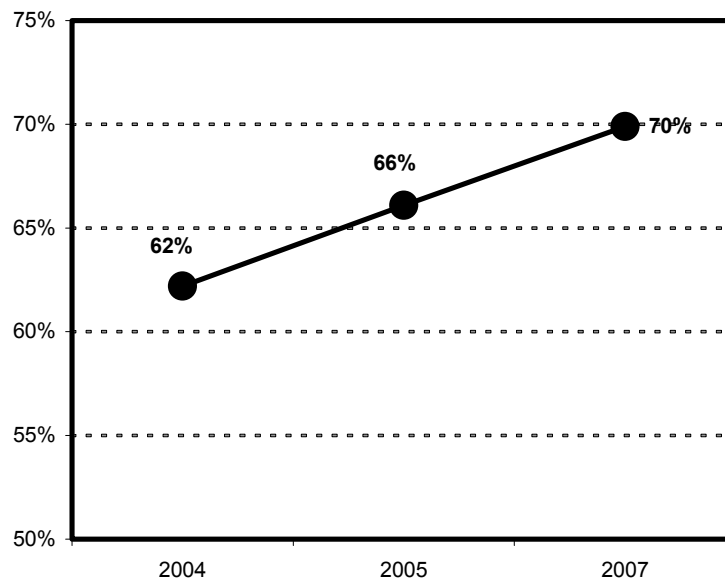
Citizens identified trash and weeds on vacant lots as concerns in their neighborhoods. Figure 10-8 shows that 39 percent of citizens were concerned about vacant lots and 41 percent were concerned about litter. These two issues received the highest levels of concern of any neighborhood physical condition, as shown by the previous chapter. The trend line in Figure 10-8 shows that concerns about litter and vacant lots increased between 2000 and 2003. They have remained stable, although slightly lower, in the last three years.

**Figure 10-8: Concerns About Physical Conditions—Litter and Vacant Lots**



The Memphis Poll gathered information about the General Services weed office. Figure 10-9 shows the ratings provided by the citizens who called the City for assistance on vacant lots.

**Figure 10-9: Citizens' Perceptions of Division of General Services' Responsiveness for Vacant Lots**



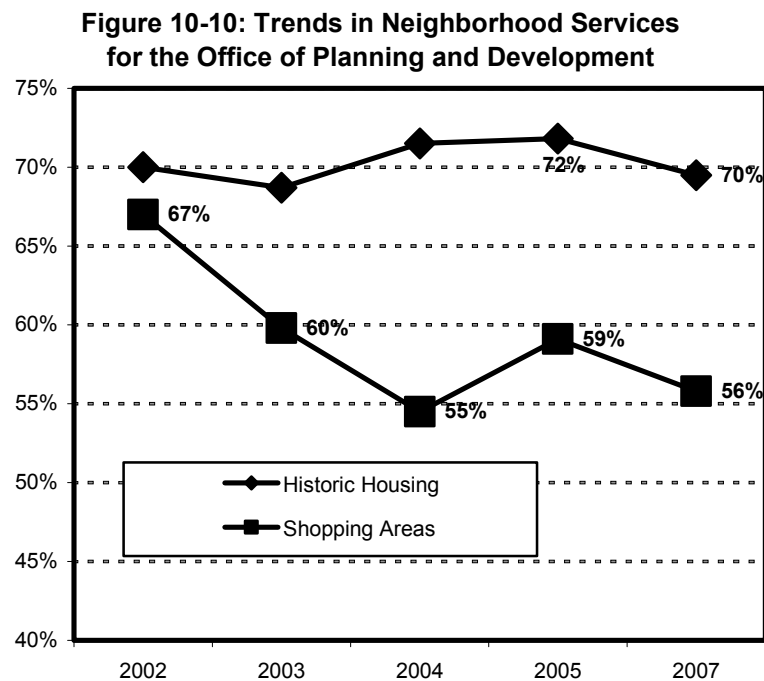
Only 70 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness (promptness and solving the problem) of the office. The 2007 results were an 8

percent improvement over 2004. However, the ratings are below the average of City services.

## Office of Planning and Development

The Office of Planning and Development (OPD) has a role in neighborhoods through land use planning and zoning. OPD also provides services to the Landmarks Commission, which is involved in design issues in historic neighborhoods. In addition, OPD is involved in improving the condition of neighborhood shopping centers. It once managed a commercial revitalization grant program for inner City neighborhoods. It is also responsible for code enforcement that involves commercial buildings and shopping centers.

Citizens were asked how well the City was doing in providing specific services with a neighborhood orientation. Figure 10-10 shows the results for areas related to the Office of Planning and Development. Overall, citizens thought efforts were mediocre in preserving historic housing. Seventy (70) percent of the citizens thought the City was responsibly preserving historic housing and buildings. The results were similar to the previous four years of the Memphis Poll.



In contrast, the results for improving shopping areas were more problematic. In 2002, when this question was first introduced, 67 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's efforts in dealing with shopping areas. Since then, the

ratings for shopping centers have declined substantially, with only 56 percent satisfaction in the current Poll—an 11 percent decline since 2002.

### **Key Findings about the Division of Housing and Community Development**

- ❑ The neighborhood revitalization programs were rated below average when compared to overall City services.
- ❑ There was a decline in the ratings for the responsiveness of the housing code enforcement office.

### **Key Findings about the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods**

- ❑ Citizens were concerned about loose dogs in their neighborhoods, a responsibility of this division.

### **Key Findings about the Executive Division**

- ❑ The citizens rated the City's efforts to help neighborhood organizations as mediocre, a responsibility of the Center for Neighborhoods.
- ❑ The ratings for interaction with the Mayor's Citizen Service Center have shown improvement since the 2002 Memphis Poll.

### **Key Findings about the Division of General Services**

- ❑ The division's responsiveness in dealing with concerns about weeds and litter on vacant lots was rated below the overall average for City services, although it has shown some improvement in the trend data.
- ❑ Citizens are highly concerned about litter on neighborhood streets, a responsibility of this division.

# Chapter 11

## Division of Public Works

This chapter examines the services provided by the Division of Public Works. It provides solid waste collection through solid waste management. The Division of Public Works also provides street maintenance, works on sewers, and addresses problems with rivers and streams.

The latter portions of this chapter will address some of the concerns that citizens had about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods, which relate to the mission of this division.

### Solid Waste Management Services

The Memphis Poll asked questions about a variety of services offered by solid waste management. This section first examines four measures of direct services—promptness, recycling services, uncontained trash collection, and neatness. Although this question was asked of all respondents, the following data are from citizens who received solid waste services from the City of Memphis crews and excluded those that received their services from private companies.

**Figure 11-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Solid Waste Management Services**

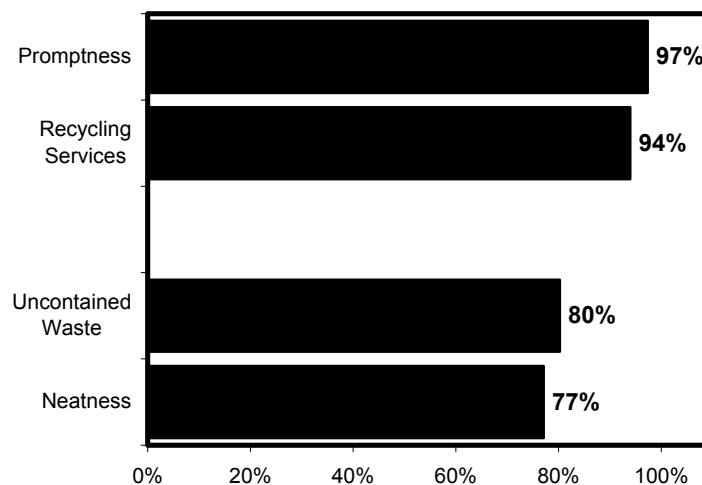
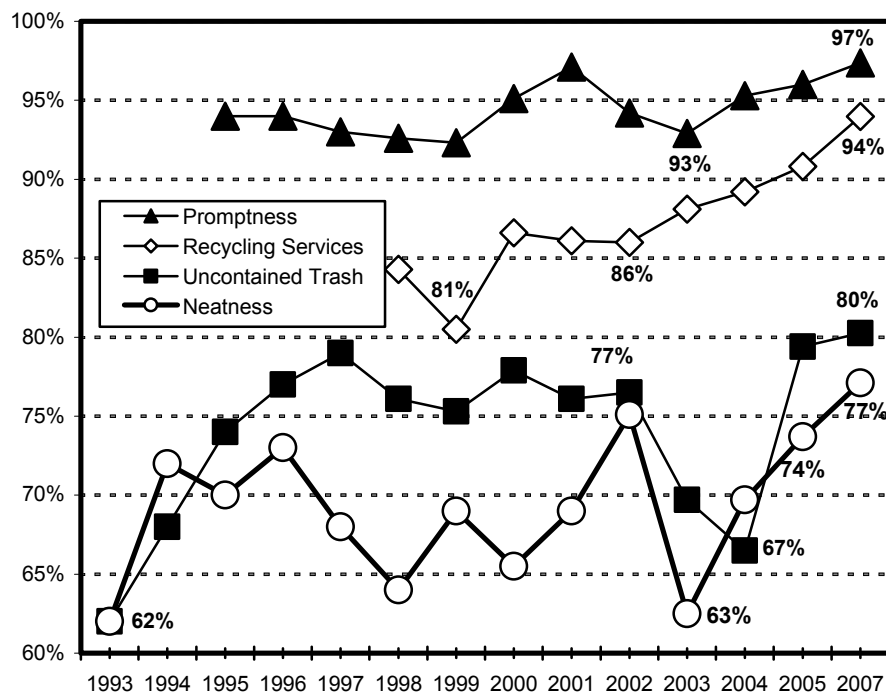


Figure 11-1 displays the results for promptness by asking if solid waste collectors consistently emptied the cart on the regular collection day.<sup>46</sup> A very high 97 percent agreed with this statement, which made solid waste promptness one of the most highly rated services in the Memphis Poll. Figure 11-2 displays the trends for promptness. It shows that promptness has had remarkable consistency, remaining in the same high range over the years of the Memphis Poll in which promptness was measured. In fact, the ratings since 2003 have shown incremental improvements each year.

**Figure 11-2: Trends in Citizens' Perceptions of Solid Waste Management Services**



The Poll examined citizens' perceptions of recycling services on solid waste routes. Citizens were asked if the solid waste collectors emptied the recycling materials on the scheduled collection day. Figure 11-1 shows 94 percent of the citizens agreed with this statement, which was well-above average when compared to all the City services. Figure 11-2 shows that recycling improved since the last Poll. The long-term trend also shows improvement from 81 percent in 1999 to 94 percent in 2007.

<sup>46</sup> The response rates for these questions were: promptness (98 percent), recycling services (91 percent), uncontained waste (94 percent), and neatness (98 percent).



Next, the collection of uncontained trash/yard waste (called uncontained trash) was examined by asking whether solid waste collectors picked up large items, such as limbs and appliances within one week. Figure 11-1 shows that 80 percent of the citizens agreed with the statement. This rating was above average when compared to the score for overall City services.

The trend data in Figure 11-2 show that citizens were increasingly pleased with uncontained trash collection compared to earlier years of the Memphis Poll. Citizens' satisfaction with uncontained trash collection declined in both 2003 and 2004. However, in 2007, 80 percent of the citizens were satisfied with uncontained waste collection, a 13 percent improvement since 2004. The rating for uncontained trash collection is also at an all time historical high.

The next service, neatness, was measured by whether citizens thought solid waste collectors were careful by not spilling waste when emptying carts. Neatness appeals to citizens because it shows that the City cares about its neighborhoods. Neatness by solid waste collection crews also decreases the levels of trash and litter on Memphis streets.

Seventy-seven (77) percent of the citizens were satisfied with neatness, a figure that was slightly below average when compared to the overall approval rating for City services. However, the trend data for neatness were very positive, as shown in Figure 11-2. The ratings for neatness increased from 63 percent in 2003 to 77 percent in the current Poll—a 14 percent improvement.

The Memphis Poll examined if there were differences on the service measures between citizens who had collection by City of Memphis crews or private companies. Eighty-seven (87) percent of the citizens said they received collection from City crews and 13 percent said they received collection from private companies.<sup>47</sup> The services provided by the City and private companies were equally effective.

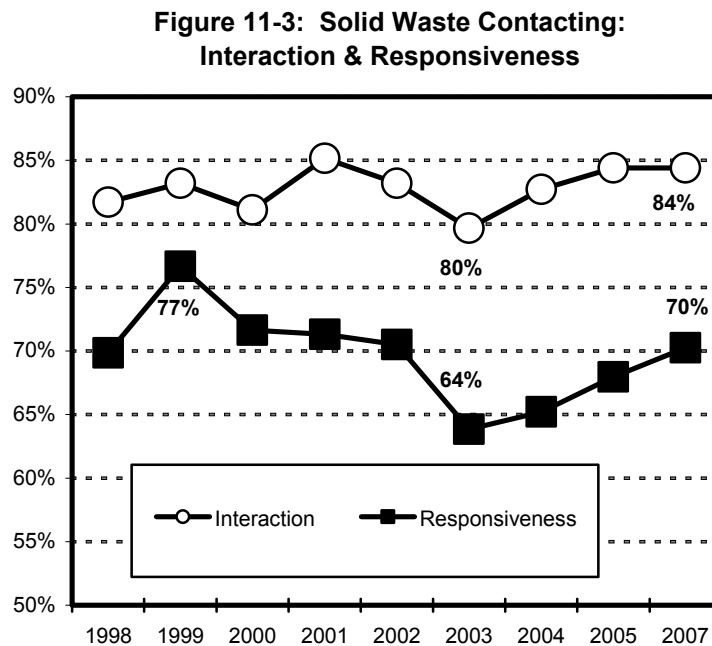
## **Contacting Solid Waste Management Services**

This section discusses the citizens' ratings when they called solid waste management for assistance about service concerns. For example, citizens may have called to complain about a missed collection day or the need to pick up uncontained trash.

---

<sup>47</sup> The response rate for this question on public and private collection was 100 percent.

Figure 11-3 provides the ratings for citizen interaction with solid waste management employees. Eight-four (84) percent of the citizens were satisfied with interaction, which included phone professionalism and courtesy.<sup>48</sup> This was the same score as in 2005 and it is in the high range when compared to previous years of the Memphis Poll.



In contrast, Figure 11-3 shows that only 70 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of solid waste management. Responsiveness involved both promptness and solving the concerns.

Figure 11-3 also provides the trend data for responsiveness of solid waste management. Responsiveness for this service reached its highest rating of 77 percent in 1999, but this figure dropped to 64 percent in 2003. The time period of 2003 to 2007 shows some incremental improvements in ratings.

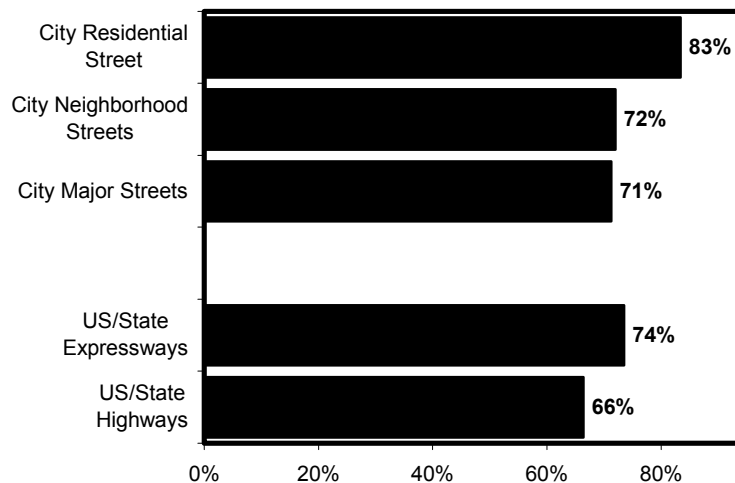
## Street Maintenance Services

Street maintenance services are located within the Division of Public Works. Figure 11-4 provides the citizens' responses concerning street maintenance

<sup>48</sup> The questions asked if the office was courteous *and attentive* during their call for service.

services.<sup>49</sup> Citizens were asked if streets were well maintained and if potholes were patched within a reasonable time. The trend data for street maintenance services are provided in Figure 11-5. The Memphis Poll asked the questions explicitly so that the responsibilities of the City and US/State were clearly stated.

**Figure 11-4: Street Maintenance by City and Other Governments' Responsibility**



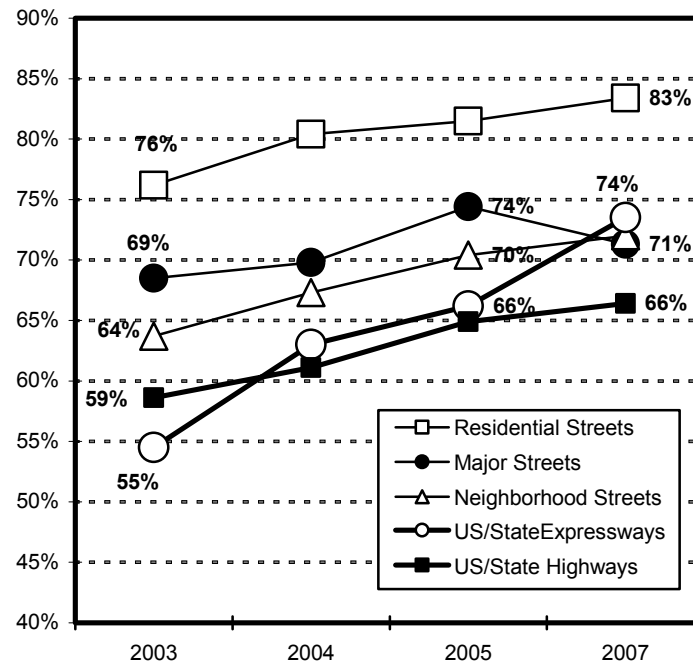
City Responsibility: The citizens were asked if they were satisfied with the maintenance of City streets in front of their houses, which were called residential streets. Eighty-three (83) percent of the citizens indicated that they were satisfied with the maintenance of their residential streets. Next, citizens were asked if their neighborhood streets were well maintained and 72 percent were satisfied with the City's performance. Citizens were asked if they were satisfied with the major streets that were the City's responsibility. The question mentioned specific streets such as Frayser Blvd, Walnut Grove Rd, Park Ave, Milbranch, Mendenhall, White Station, and Yale Rd. The Poll found that 71 percent of the citizens were satisfied with these streets. The trend data in Figure 11-5 shows consistent improvement for the residential street and neighborhood streets. The rating for major streets declined slightly in the current Poll.

US/State Responsibility: The Poll found that 74 percent of the citizens were satisfied with maintenance on the expressways. The Memphis Poll also asked if US/State highways were well maintained. The question specifically mentioned examples such as Elvis Presley Blvd, Poplar Ave, Jackson Ave, Summer Ave, Lamar Ave, and Austin Peay Hwy. Sixty-six (66) percent of the citizens agreed

<sup>49</sup> The response rates for these questions were: residential streets (98 percent), major streets (94 percent), neighborhood streets (99 percent), US/State expressways (92 percent), and US/State highways (95 percent).

that these highways were well maintained. Overall, the trend data in Figure 11-5 shows consistent improvements in the roads maintained by the State of Tennessee and the U.S. government. The results for the Expressways were a more substantial increase than any other street type in 2007.

**Figure 11-5: Citizen's Perceptions of Trends in Street Maintenance**



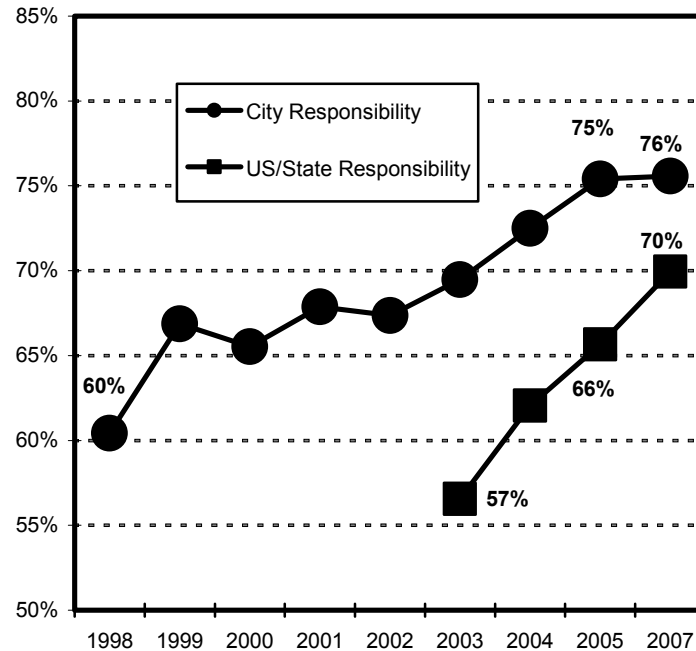
Next, Figure 11-6 provides an overall summary of the trends for streets that are City responsibilities and US/State responsibilities. The data for the City included a period that started in 1998, while the US/State data were only available since 2003.

The citizens were more satisfied with the street maintenance that was the City's responsibility than the US/State responsibility. The average score for the three types of streets that are the City's responsibility was 76 percent. In contrast, the average score for the highways that are US/State governments' responsibility was 70 percent.

Overall, this data show that, with the exception of major streets, there were consistent improvements in street maintenance for each of the street types, whether City responsibility or US/State responsibility. The differences between street types that are the responsibility of the City and US/State have narrowed over time.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> These findings should be compared to City priorities discussed in Chapter 3.

**Figure 11-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Averaged Street Maintenance Trends**



## Contacting Street Maintenance Service

The Memphis Poll also examined interaction and responsiveness when the citizens contacted street maintenance about their concerns.

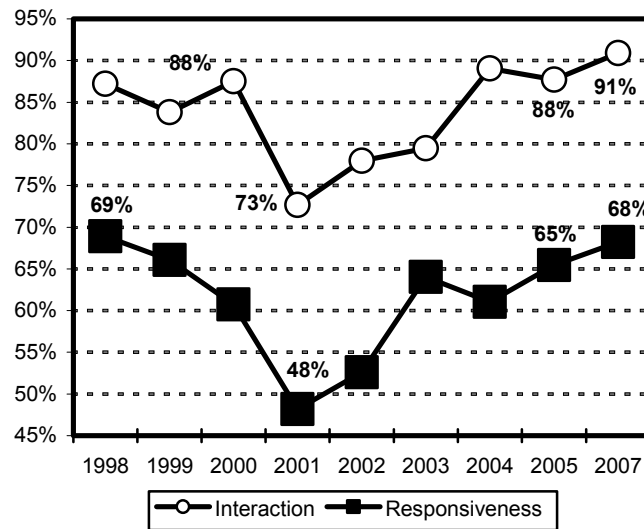
Figure 11-7 shows that the ratings for interaction were positive.<sup>51</sup> Ninety-one (91) percent of the citizens were satisfied with interaction when calling street maintenance about concerns. This rating was significantly above the average for the overall approval rating of all City agencies. The street services office has showed a consistent and impressive improvement in interaction over time. In 2001, the interaction rating for street maintenance was 73 percent and that improved to 91 percent in 2007.

Figure 11-7 also shows the results for responsiveness which were not as positive as for interaction.<sup>52</sup> Only 68 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of street maintenance services. However, the trend data show that responsiveness of the streets maintenance office consistently increased from 48 percent in 2001 to 68 percent in 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Interaction refers to the citizens' ratings for phone professionalism, and courteousness/attentiveness.

<sup>52</sup> Responsiveness refers to the citizens rating for promptness and performance by solving the problems. The Division of Public Works attributes some of the concerns from citizens that want their streets paved. The greatest concerns about responsiveness were from the Northwest section of the City.

**Figure 11-7: Street Contacting:  
Interaction and Responsiveness**



## Physical Conditions

The Division of Public Works provides services related to physical conditions that have an impact on the quality of a neighborhood. These specific physical conditions include street drainage, alley maintenance, pollution of rivers and streams, and streetlights. Abating or monitoring the pollution of rivers/streams is a function shared with the State of Tennessee and the Health Department.

This section provides a context for examining these conditions. Until 2001, citizens expressed few concerns about physical conditions. However, the last years of the Memphis Poll have shown increases in citizens' concerns. For display purposes, the results for these conditions are presented in separate figures.

Figure 11-8 provides information about maintenance of City alleys.<sup>53</sup> The trend data show substantial increases in citizens' concerns over time. In 2001, only 11 percent of the citizens were concerned about alley maintenance, but in 2003, this result had increased to 34 percent. These ratings declined slightly to 32 percent in 2007.

<sup>53</sup> The response rate for alleys was 75 percent.

**Figure 11-8: Citizens' Concerns About Physical Conditions: Alleys and Streetlights**

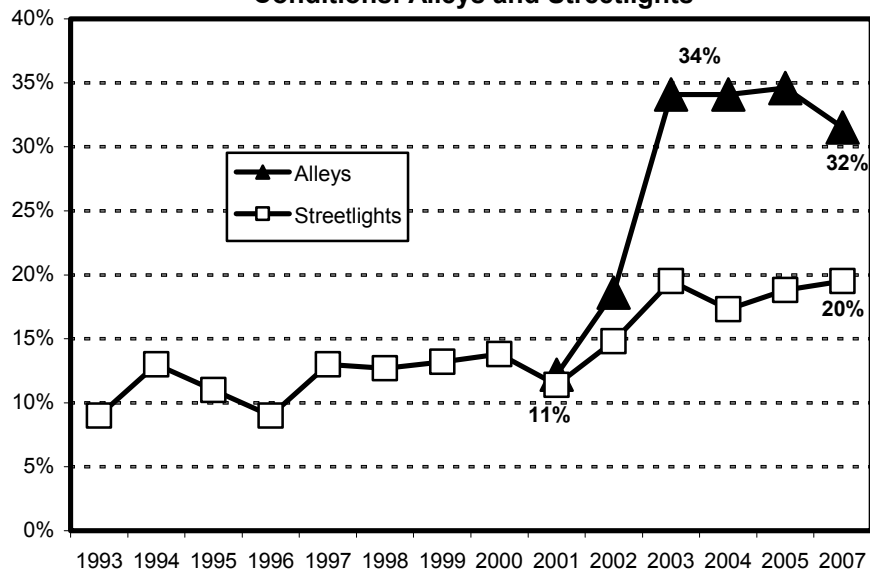


Figure 11-8 also provides information about neighborhood streetlights.<sup>54</sup> Twenty (20) percent of citizens considered streetlights a problem in their neighborhoods in 2007. Thus, streetlights are only very modest concerns for citizens and the change in ratings over time has been minimal. However, there have been gradual, increasing concerns about streetlights.<sup>55</sup>

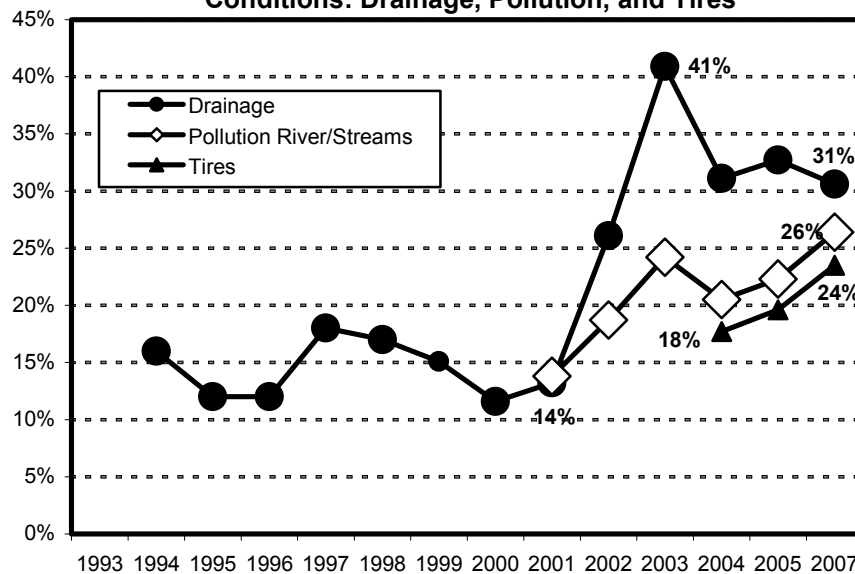
Figure 11-9 provides information about drainage after rainstorms.<sup>56</sup> The Memphis Poll showed that these data are very sensitive to the level of rain fall. The data for 2002 and 2003 showed large increases in concerns because of the large rainstorms that hit the City. The data for 2004 through 2007 show a downturn in the levels of concern, although the results remain considerably higher than in 2001 and the earlier years.

<sup>54</sup> The response rate for streetlights was 99 percent.

<sup>55</sup> MLGW shares some responsibility for streetlights since they replace burned out lights. The increasing concerns could also be related to concerns about crime.

<sup>56</sup> The response rate for drainage after rainstorms was 100 percent.

**Figure 11-9: Citizens' Concerns About Physical Conditions: Drainage, Pollution, and Tires**



The results for drainage after rainstorms displayed in Figure 11-10, show that the greatest concerns about drainage were in Downtown. In 2005, Midtown citizens had the greatest concerns about drainage after rainstorms. It appears that there is some variation in concerns by area of the City from year to year based on rainfall amount.

Figure 11-9 also examines pollution of rivers and streams.<sup>57</sup> Only 26 percent of the citizens were concerned about this issue. There was a modest increase in concerns from 14 percent in 2001 to 26 percent in 2007.

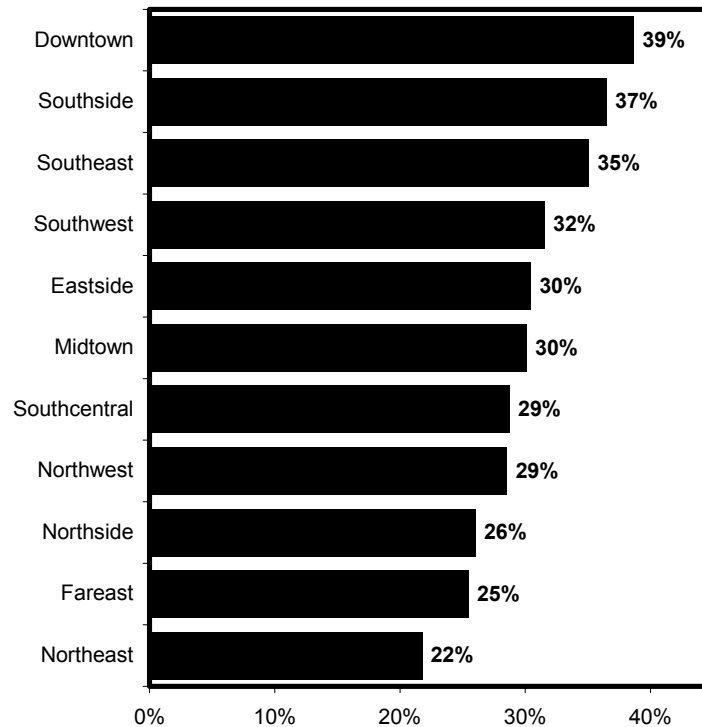
Finally, the Memphis Poll asked if tires were left on neighborhood streets for more than two weeks.<sup>58</sup> This was a new issue in the 2004 Memphis Poll. It was thought that some inner City neighborhoods had infestations of tires on public streets. Solid waste management is responsible for collecting tires in public areas. Figure 11-9 shows that in 2004 there were modest concerns with 18 percent of the citizens' rating tires as problems in their neighborhoods—by 2007 that number gradually increased to 24 percent.

<sup>57</sup> The response rate for this question about rivers and streams was 86 percent.

<sup>58</sup> The response rate for this question about tires was 98 percent.



**Figure 11-10: Concerns About Drainage after Rainstorms by Area of the City**



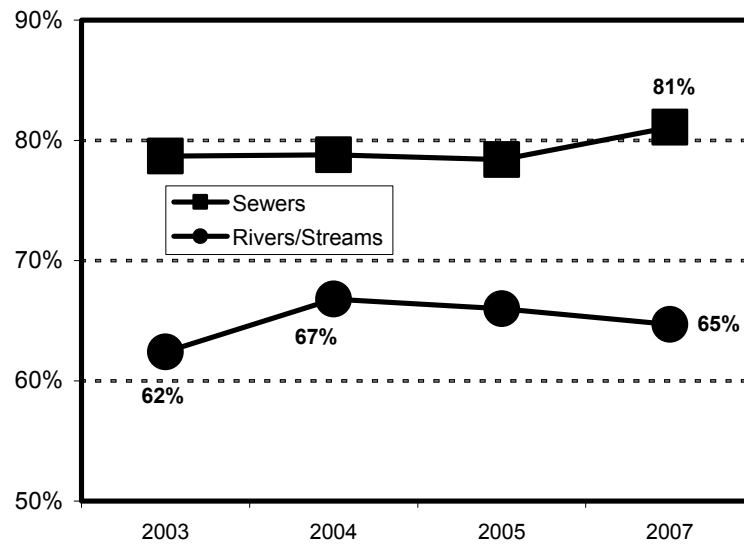
## Assessing Neighborhood Services

The 2003 Memphis Poll introduced a series of new questions about how well the City was doing in providing specific services. Questions were asked about sewer maintenance and pollution abatement of rivers and streams<sup>59</sup>, which are services of the Division of Public Works. The Memphis Poll asked the citizens if the City was doing a good job of maintaining the sewer system in the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 11-11 shows that 81 percent agreed with this statement. These findings were consistent throughout the four years in which this information was collected.

The Poll also asked if the City was doing a good job improving the quality of rivers and streams in the citizens' neighborhoods. This is a function that the Division of Public Works shares with the State of Tennessee and the Health Department. Figure 11-11 shows that 65 percent of citizens agreed that the City was addressing this problem, which was below average of all City services. The data were generally consistent throughout the years of the Memphis Poll during which this information was collected.

<sup>59</sup> The responses to these questions were: sewers (97 percent) and rivers/streams (53 percent).

**Figure 11-11: Citizens' Perceptions of Maintaining Sewers and Improving Rivers/Streams**



### Key Findings

- ❑ The findings for solid waste collection services were very impressive – service ratings were at or near all time highs in the history of the Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Citizens thought that most streets were better maintained in 2007 than in previous years – this was a long-term trend.

## Chapter 12

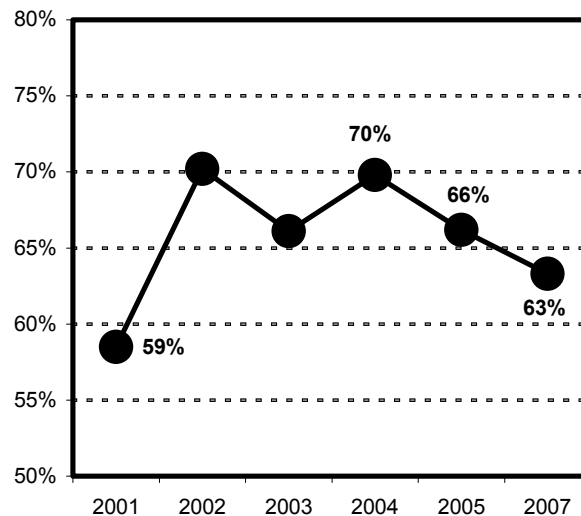
# Communication with Citizens

This chapter discusses the communication of information between citizens and City government. It examines the perceptions that citizens have of City-initiated attempts to inform them about governmental activity. It also examines citizen-initiated contact with City government and citizens' perceptions of the quality of work performed by the City as a result of that contact.

### City-Initiated Communication

The City informs citizens about public issues and services. This section examines the perceptions that citizens had of City-initiated attempts to inform them about governmental activity. This is the sixth year in which the Memphis Poll has included these questions.

**Figure 12-1: Citizens' Satisfaction with Being Informed by the City**



Citizens were asked how well the City kept them informed regarding City government matters that affected them.<sup>60</sup> Figure 12-1 shows that 63 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's attempts at informing them. The trend shows a decline from 70 percent in 2004 to 63 percent in 2007—a 7 percent decrease.

<sup>60</sup> The response rate for being informed by the City was 98 percent.

Whites were less satisfied than African Americans about being informed by the City.

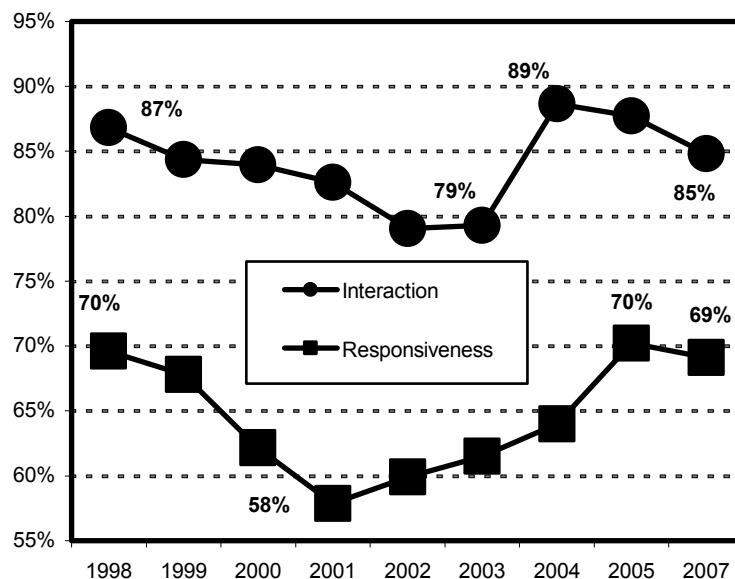
## Contacting City Government

This section introduces information about citizens' perceptions of their contact with governmental officials and City employees. The Memphis Poll provides extensive details about contacting. The data on contacting should be used carefully because of small sample sizes. For example, if just 10 percent of the citizens contacted a service, the opinions of only 91 citizens were used to determine how citizens rated the service. Despite this limitation, the data are worth examining, but only with that caveat in mind.

Contacting was initiated by citizens, and typically involved expressions of concerns about specific services and a request for City action. The Memphis Poll asked the citizens about the quality of both interaction with and responsiveness of the City.

Interaction involves citizens' satisfaction in their communication with the City agencies. Specifically, interaction is a combination of phone professionalism and courtesy.<sup>61</sup> Figure 12-2 shows that 85 percent of the citizens were satisfied in their interactions with City officials.

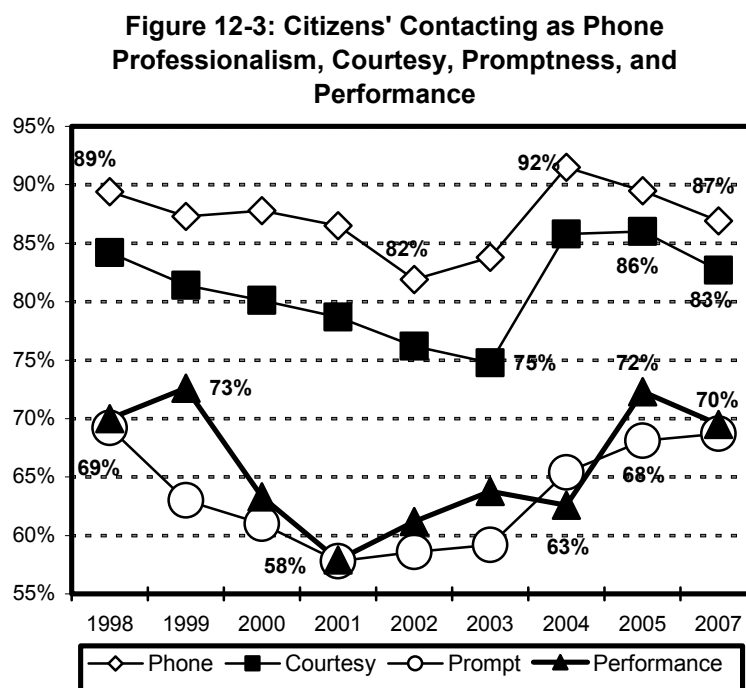
**Figure 12-2: Citizens' Contacting as Interaction and Responsiveness**



<sup>61</sup> The questions asked if the office was courteous *and* attentive during their call for service.

Figure 12-2 shows that from 1998 to 2003 there was a consistent decline in the citizens' ratings for interaction from 87 to 79 percent. The ratings in 2004 showed large improvements compared to the 2003 Memphis Poll. However, two Polls since that year have shown small but consistent declines.

Figure 12-3 provides the specific components of interaction. It shows that citizens were more satisfied with phone professionalism (87 percent) than with courtesy (83 percent). Both of these measures showed the same consistent decline in the last three Polls. In fact, the trend lines for phone professionalism and courtesy have mirrored each other throughout the history of the Memphis Poll.



The ratings for responsiveness were substantially lower than interaction. Responsiveness refers to the citizens' ratings for promptness and the performance of the City in solving the concern. Figure 12-2 shows that only 69 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of City officials as a result of the contact. The trend data show a steady decline to the lowest point in 2001 and an equally steady improvement in ratings to 2005. The 2007 ratings for responsiveness were just slightly lower than the highest scores for this measure.

Figure 12-3 shows the trend lines for promptness and performance, which are the two components of responsiveness. Overall, these two trends have been similar throughout the years in which these issues have been examined. Although,

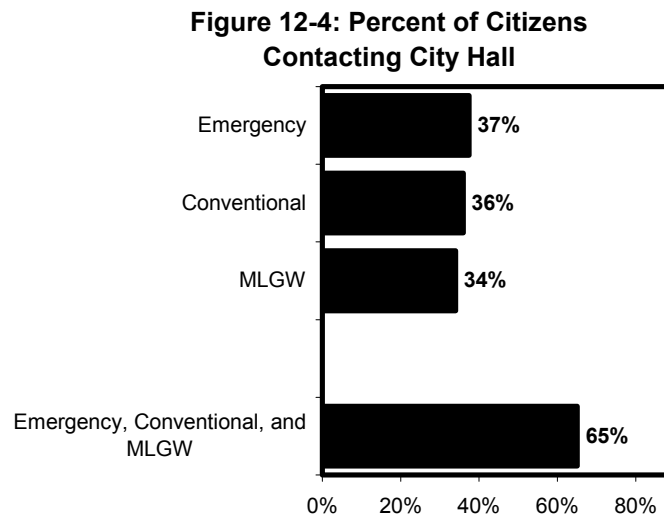
performance showed a 9 percent improvement in the 2005 Memphis Poll while promptness had less of an increase. Both remained very near the 2005 ratings.

These results show lower levels of citizens' satisfaction about the responsiveness of the City. Many citizens felt that the City was not solving their problems when they contacted City Hall for assistance. However, it does appear that the rating for responsiveness has improved over time.

## The Extent of Contacting

This section discusses the level of contacting and the specific agencies that were contacted.

Figure 12-4 shows that 36 percent of the citizens contacted the City in the last year regarding six issues or functions discussed below, which are called conventional contacts. The conventional contacts included calls about solid waste, streets, vacant lots, abandoned vehicles, rundown houses, and other calls directly to the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC).



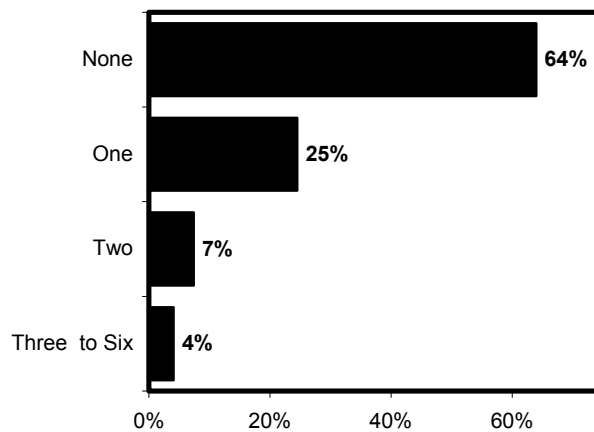
Information was collected about two other sources of citizens' contacts which are discussed in other areas of this report. Thirty-four (34) percent of the citizens called Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW), which made it a major call center for the City of Memphis. Chapter 8 discusses the calls that were made to MLGW. Thirty-seven (37) percent of the citizens made emergency calls for police, fire, and ambulance, making that area another major call center.

Figure 12-4 also shows that 65 percent of the citizens called at least one of the following areas: conventional, MLGW, or emergency. Overall, these data

suggests that the agencies at City Hall received an enormous number of calls from citizens.

Figure 12-5 shows the data for the extent of contacting conventional service areas. It shows that 25 percent of the citizens contacted one service, another 7 percent called two services, and 4 percent of the citizens called three to six conventional services.

**Figure 12-5: Number of Agencies Contacted by Citizens for Six Conventional Service Areas**



**Figure 12-6: Citizens' Contacting By Six Conventional Service Areas**

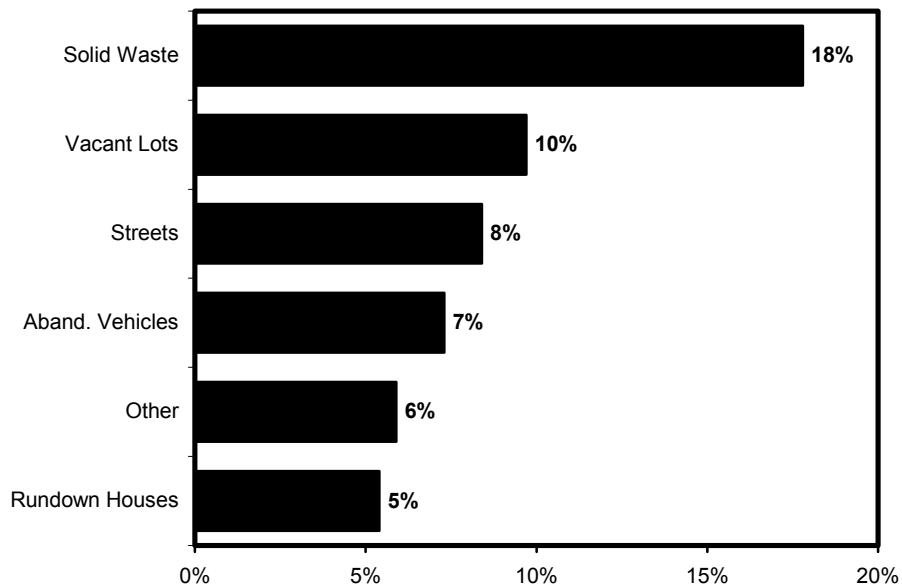
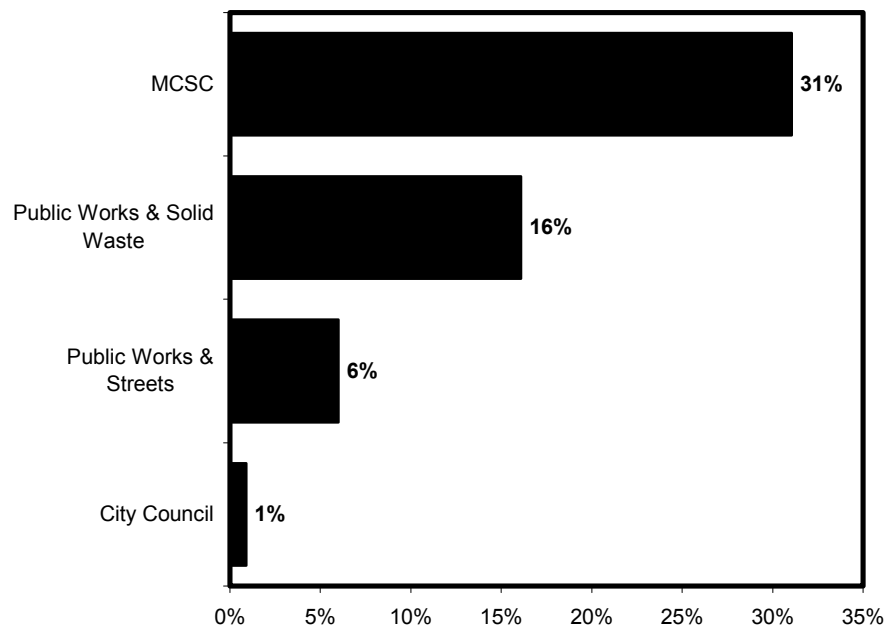


Figure 12-6 provides the data for the extent of citizens' contacting of these six functions. The largest number of contacts was made for solid waste services with 18 percent. The next tier of functions included vacant lots (10 percent), streets (8 percent), abandoned vehicles (7 percent), other concerns<sup>62</sup> (6 percent), and rundown houses (5 percent).

Next, it was possible to determine the intake agencies for complaints about these functions.<sup>63</sup>

Figure 12-7 shows the agencies that performed the intake for the functions discussed above. The first tier with the highest percentage of contacts was the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC) with 31 percent. This is an increase from the previous Memphis Polls since the MCSC is now the intake agency for rundown houses, weeds on vacant lots, and abandoned vehicles.<sup>64</sup>

**Figure 12-7: Intake Office for Conventional Contacts  
(Estimated)**



The Division of Public Works had an intake total of 22 percent, making it a large call center. That figure can be broken down as follows: 16 percent of calls were for solid waste and 6 percent were for streets.

<sup>62</sup> "Other concerns" were the complaints that went directly to the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and do not include solid waste, streets, vacant lots, junk cars, or rundown houses.

<sup>63</sup> These data required estimation. As a result, there could be up to a 2 percent variation brought about by the estimation process. The chart does not report on the health department that rounded to 0 percent.

<sup>64</sup> The manager of the Mayor's Citizen Service Center said that all intake for these functions came through their center and not the operating agencies.

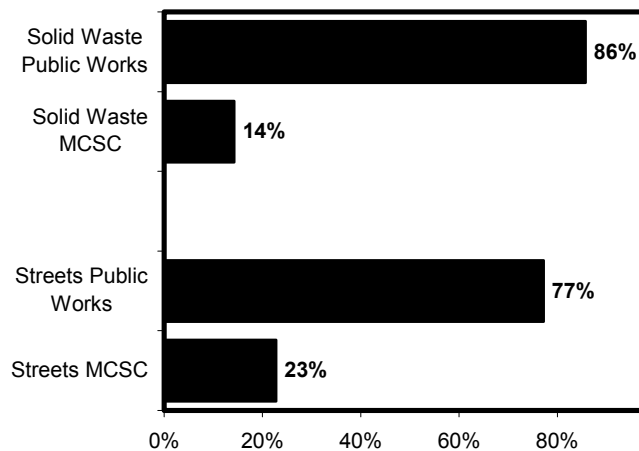


City Council trailed with a limited number of intake contacts.

Next, the Poll examined if the intake for each function was performed by the operating agency or by the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC). These data were paired to compare the ratings for the primary operating agency and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. Minor intake points, such as the Health Department and the City Council, were omitted due to the low levels of citizen-initiated contacts.

Figure 12-8 displays the results by intake source (Mayor's Citizen Service Center or operating agency) for citizens' contacts and by function. The Division of Public Works had a high level of intake with its two services—solid waste and street maintenance accounted for 86 percent and 77 percent of contacts respectively.

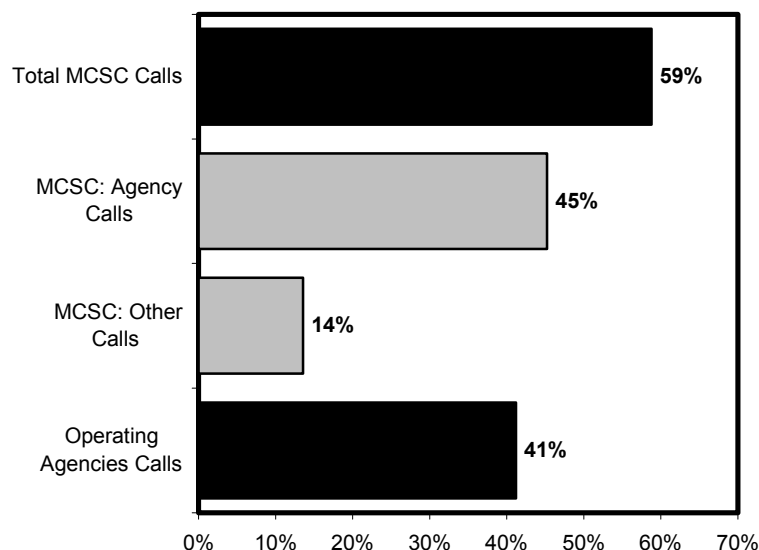
**Figure 12-8: Intake for Citizens' Contacts  
(Estimated)  
Comparing Operating Agencies and MCSC**



Next, the Poll combined this information to examine the policy implications of these data. Figure 12-9 shows the overall source of the intake for the citizens' contacts with City Hall.<sup>65</sup> Fifty-nine (59) percent of the total calls were to the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. Forty-five (45) percent of the intake for conventional complaints was done by the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. Intake for other complaints, 14 percent, was done by the Mayor's Citizen Services Center. Forty-one (41) percent of the intake for conventional complaints was done by the operating agencies themselves.

<sup>65</sup> These computations exclude City Council and the Health Department.

**Figure 12-9: Intake Source for Conventional Contacts (Estimated)**



## Interaction

This section will examine whether the Mayor's Citizen Service Center or the operating agencies did a better job of responding to citizens. It will provide information about two components of interaction—phone professionalism and courtesy.

**Figure 12-10: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City Agency - Answered Phone Professionally**

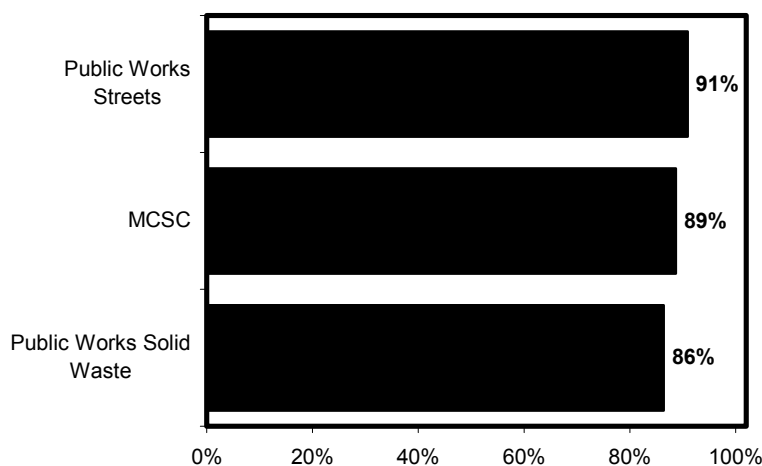
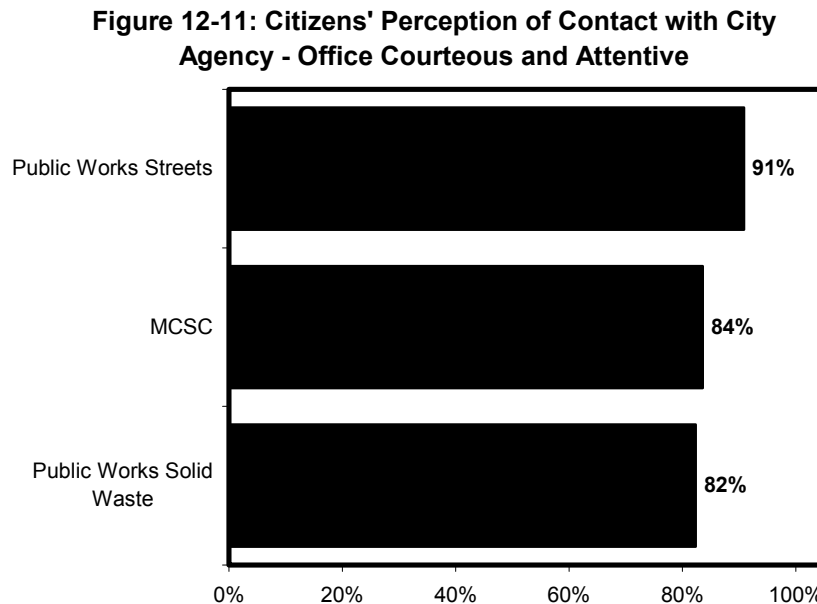


Figure 12-10 provides the ratings for answering the phone professionally by the agencies that did the intake. The higher tier ranged from 89 to 91 percent and included Division of Public Works' street maintenance (91 percent) and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (89 percent). Slightly lower was the Division of Public Works' solid waste with 86 percent satisfaction.

Next, the second component of interaction—whether the office was courteous<sup>66</sup> towards the citizens was examined. The ratings for courtesy for the agencies that did the intake are shown in Figure 12-11. The Public Works street office had the highest score with 91 percent – an excellent score. The Mayor's Citizen Service Center (84 percent) and Public Works' solid waste (82 percent) had lower scores.



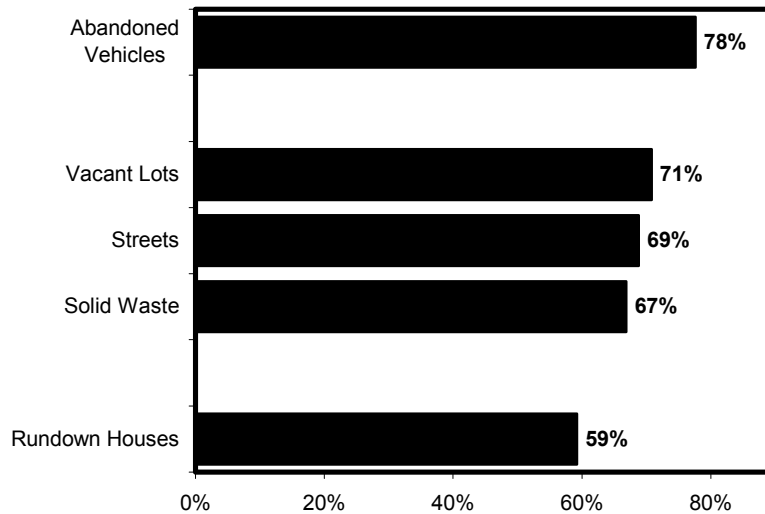
## Responsiveness

This section will provide information about the two components of responsiveness—promptness and performance. The data will be presented for agencies, which are responsible for addressing the problem.

Figure 12-12 shows information by agency for promptness in responding to the citizens' concerns. The Division of Housing and Community Development's code enforcement response to abandoned vehicles had the highest score with 78 percent — although this was a decline of 7 percent when compared to 2005.

<sup>66</sup> The question asked if the office was courteous *and* attentive during their call for service.

**Figure 12-12: Citizens' Perception of Promptness for Contacting City**



Three other services had lower scores that ranged from 67 percent to 71 percent. These included the General Services' weed office that deals with vacant lots, the Division of Public Works' street maintenance and solid waste. The Division of Housing and Community Development's responsiveness for rundown houses had the lowest score for promptness at 59 percent.

Next, this section discusses performance of the agencies, which was defined as solving the problem that prompted the citizens to contact City Hall.

**Figure 12-13: Citizens' Perception of Performance for Contacting City**

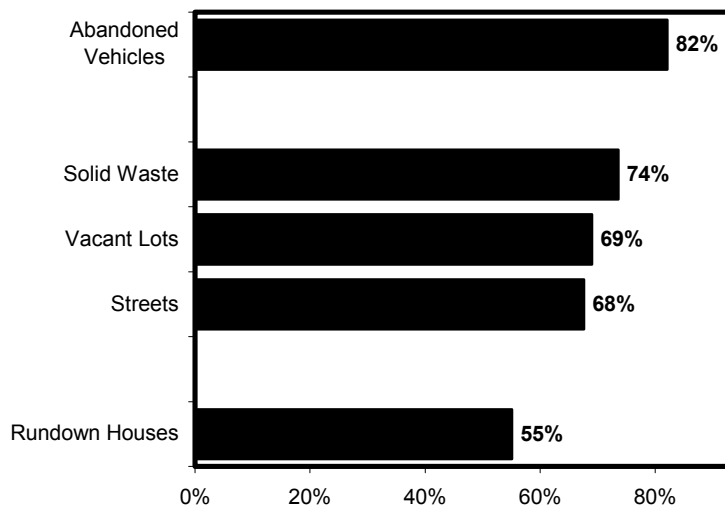


Figure 12-13 shows the ratings for performance. The top tier at 82 percent included only the Division of Housing and Community Development's abandoned vehicle service – although this was a decline of 9 percent from 2005. The second tier, ranging from 68 to 74 percent included the Division of Public Works 'solid waste management, the General Services' weed office that deals with vacant lots and Public Works' street office.

The lowest tier included only Housing and Community Development's housing code enforcement for rundown houses with a 55 percent rating. Overall, this score makes housing code enforcement one of the weaker agencies in City Hall.

## Race and Contacting

Figure 12-14 shows that white residents were considerably less satisfied with interaction when calling City Hall.<sup>67</sup> Whites had high levels of dissatisfaction with the Mayor's Citizen Service Center phone professionalism (17 percent) and courtesy (17 percent). They were also less pleased with courtesy and phone professionalism of Public Works solid waste – albeit at a lower level than the Mayor's Citizen Service Center.

**Figure 12-14: Percent of Greater Concerns  
Whites Compared to African Americans**

Whites Less Positive	Percent
MCSC Phone Professionalism	17
MCSC Courtesy	17
Public Works Solid Waste Courtesy	10
Public Works Solid Waste Phone Professionalism	10

These are troubling findings. Whatever the reasons, some effort needs to be made to proactively respond to these citizens.

<sup>67</sup> The response rates were as follows: MCSC phone professionalism was 44 percent, MCSC courtesy was 44 percent, solid waste courtesy was 22 percent, and solid waste professionalism was 22 percent.

## **Key Findings**

- ❑ Citizens' contacting City government ratings for interaction showed a decline and the results for responsiveness were about the same when comparing 2005 and 2007.
- ❑ The Mayor's Citizen Service Center and Division of Public Works are both large intake centers for calls to City Hall.
- ❑ Housing code enforcement showed declines in both interaction and responsiveness.
- ❑ The Memphis Poll found that white citizens were less positive in their assessment of contacting City Hall.

# Chapter 13

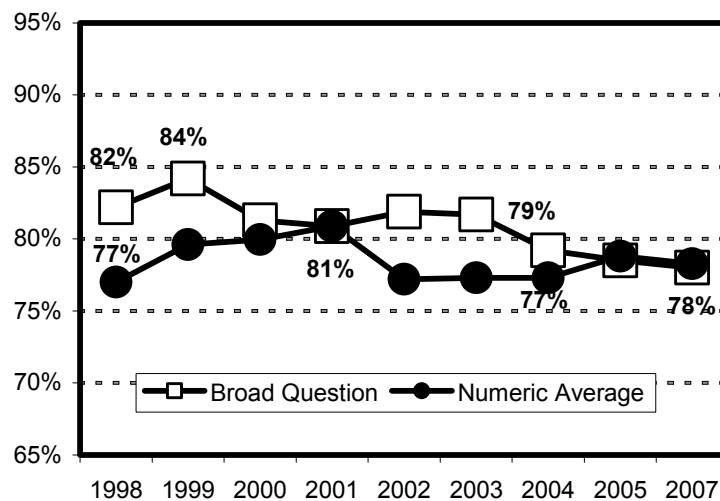
## Comparison of Services

This chapter allows the reader to make direct comparisons among various City services. It assesses both the individual service measures and groups services by division. Although complex, this chapter provides the reader with a documented procedure for analyzing services. The reader should carefully review the tables in this chapter to obtain a sense of how the citizens ranked the services.

### Overall Ranking of the City

The Poll measured citizen satisfaction with a broad question on overall services provided by the City of Memphis. Figure 13-1 shows that 78 percent of the citizens were satisfied with overall City services in 2007.

**Figure 13-1: Overall Scores for City Services**



The Memphis Poll also prepared a composite measure that was the numeric average of all the specific service categories discussed in earlier chapters. The composite measure showed that 78 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's services. This number was very similar to 2005. In summary, these overall measures continue to show that citizens are satisfied with City services.

## Comparing Specific Services

The next section provides a comprehensive rating of services. Because of the large number of services, the above average services were placed in Figure 13-2 and the below average services were placed in Figure 13-3. The broad score for overall services, 78 percent, was used for these computations. These data provide the reader with the opportunity to compare the myriad of services offered by the City of Memphis.

### Above Average Services

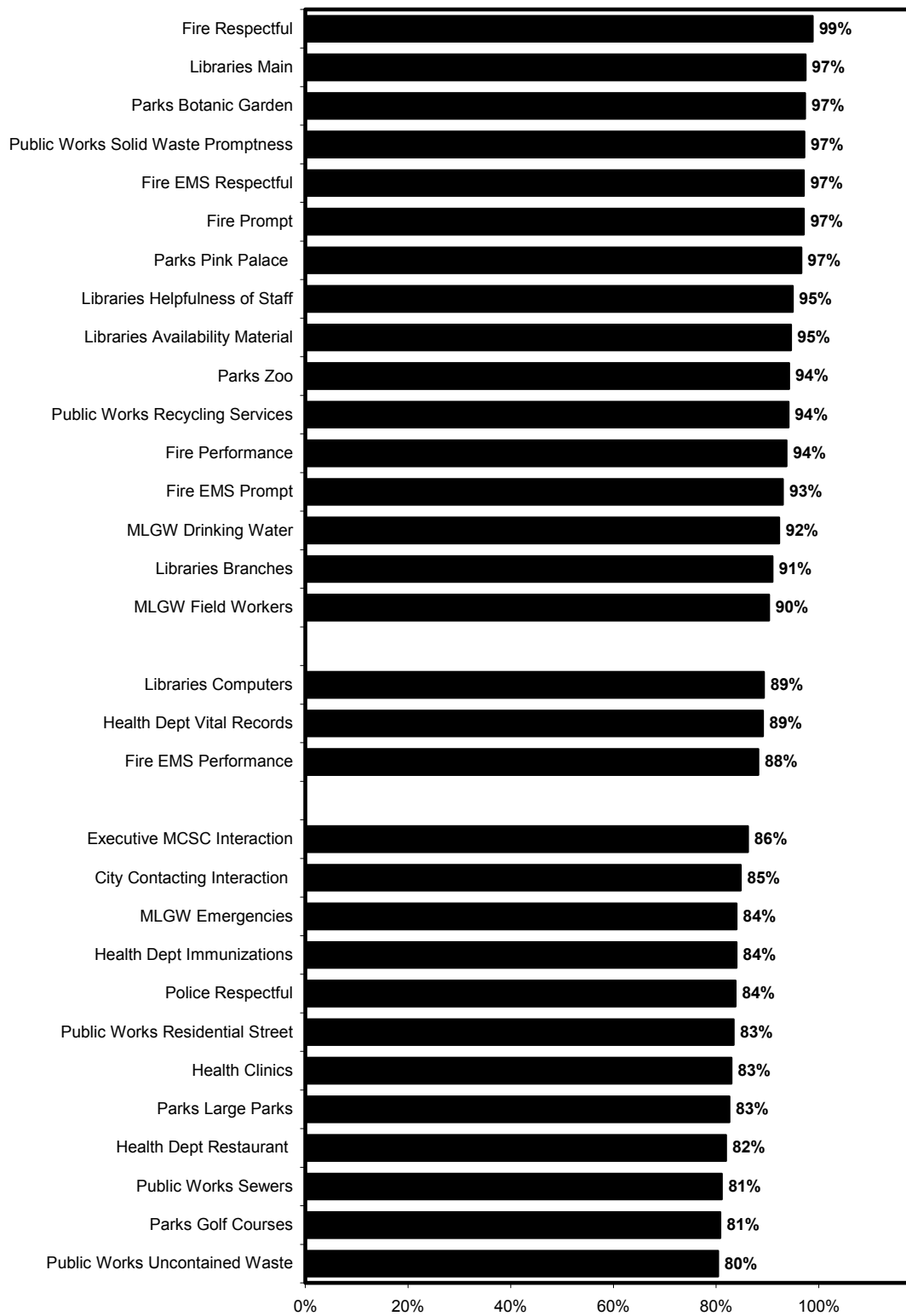
The highest-rated services had positive scores that ranged from 90 to 99 percent and are clustered at the top of Figure 13-2. These services included: Fire Department (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), EMS (respectfulness and promptness), Public Library and Information Center (main library, helpfulness of staff, availability of materials, and branches), Division of Park Services (Botanic Garden, Pink Palace, and Zoo), Division of Public Works (solid waste promptness and recycling services), and MLGW (drinking water and field workers).

The second highest tier of above average services ranged from 88 to 89 percent. These services included: Public Library and Information Center (computers), Health Department (vital records), and EMS (performance).

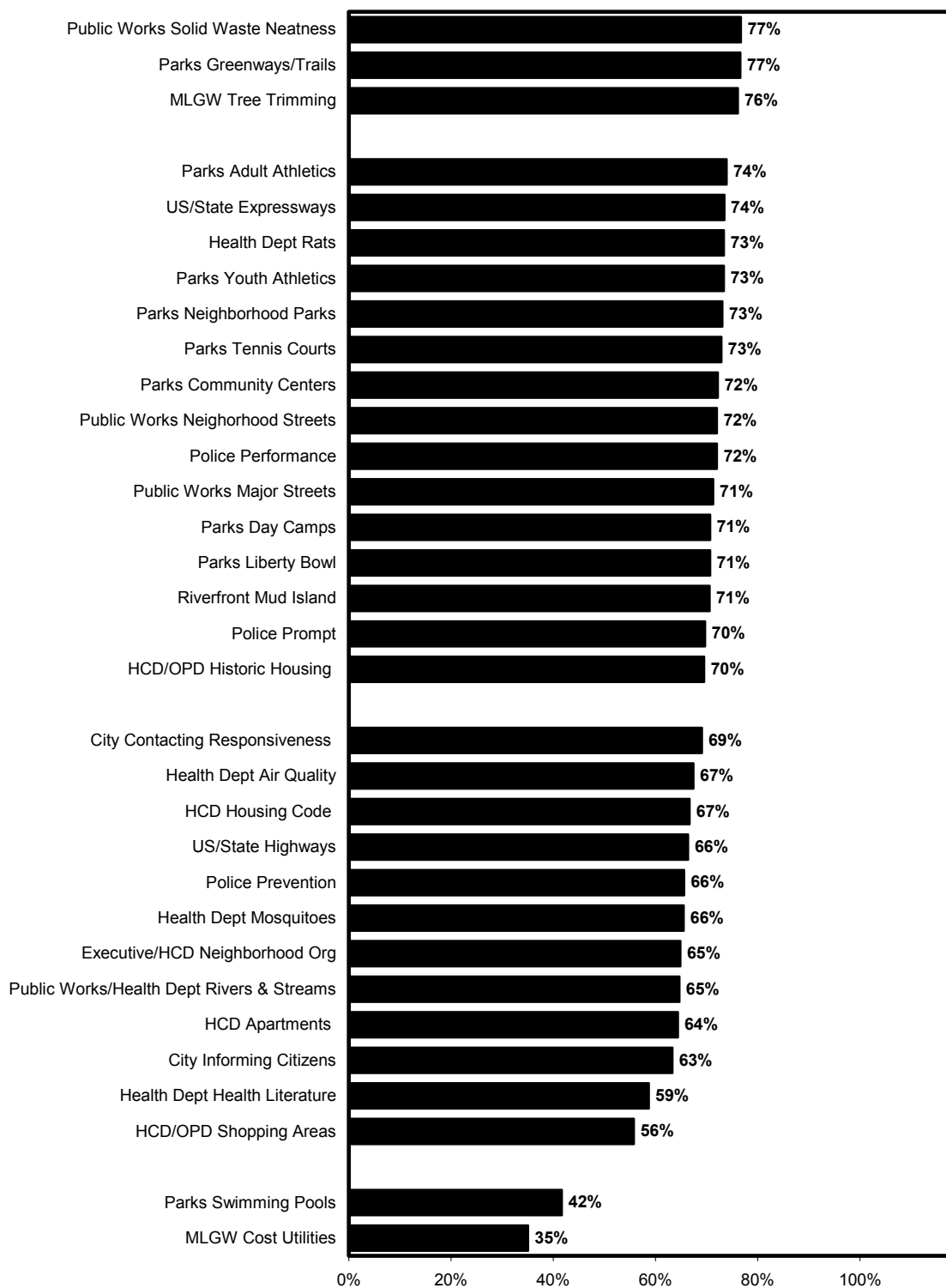
The third highest tier of above average services ranged from 80 to 86 percent. This tier included: Mayor's Citizen Service Center (contacting interaction), City (contacting interaction), MLGW (emergencies), Health Department (immunizations, clinics, and restaurant inspection), Division of Police Services (respectfulness), Division of Public Works (residential streets, sewers, and collection of uncontained waste), and Division of Park Services (larger parks and golf courses).



**Figure 13-2: Above Average Services**



**Figure 13-3: Below Average Services**



## Below Average Services

The below average services are displayed in Figure 13-3. Again, the broad overall score for City services was 78 percent. However, below average does not mean services were inadequate. It simply means that services were not as highly rated as other services in the City. However, as the services reach levels well below average, they may be much more problematic.

Slightly below average services ranged from 76 to 77 percent. These services included: Division of Public Works (solid waste neatness), Division of Park Services (greenways/trails), and MLGW (tree trimming).

Other services were further below average and they ranged from 70 to 74 percent. These services included: Division of Park Services (adult athletics, youth athletics, neighborhood parks, tennis courts, community centers, day camps, and Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium), US/State (expressways), Health Department (rat control), Division of Public Works (neighborhood streets and major streets), Division of Police Services (performance and promptness), Riverfront Development Corporation (Mud Island River Park), and Division of Housing and Community Development/Office of Planning and Development (preserving historic housing).

The services rated well below average ranged from 56 to 69 percent. These services included: City (contacting responsiveness and informing citizens), Health Department (air quality, mosquito control, health literature), Division of Housing and Community Development (housing code enforcement and apartments/public housing), US/State (highways), Division of Police Services (crime prevention), Health Department (controlling mosquitoes), Executive Division/Division of Housing and Community Development (neighborhood organizations), Division of Public Works/Health Department (improving rivers and streams), and Division of Housing and Community Development/Office of Planning and Development (shopping areas).

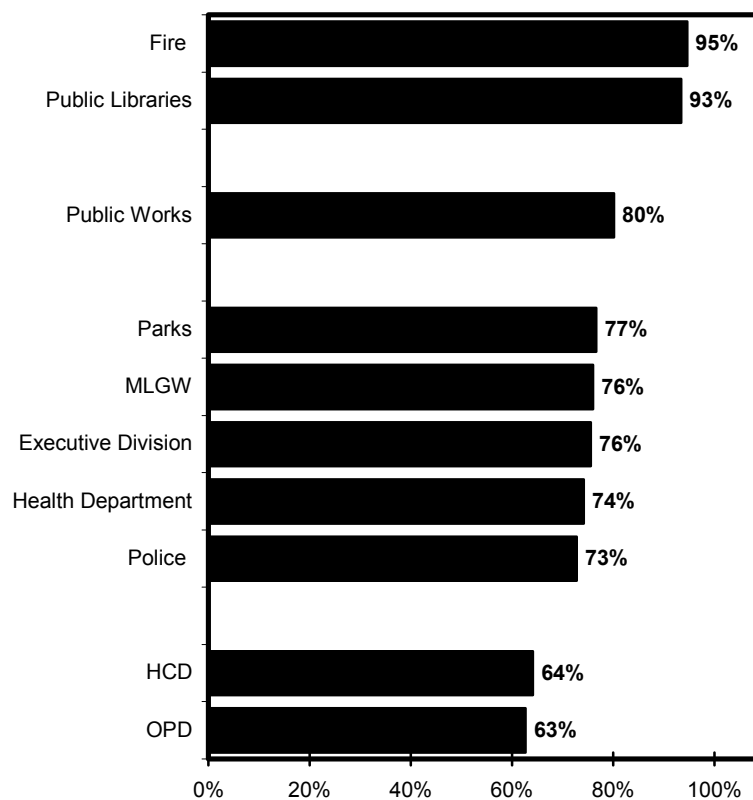
The very lowest services this year, ranging from 35 to 42 percent, were Division of Park Services' public swimming pools and Memphis Light, Gas and Water's cost of utilities.

## Comparison by Divisions

Figure 13-4 compares the overall score of each division by averaging the scores of the specific service categories for which they were responsible.

The highest-rated divisions had ratings from 93 to 95 percent. The Division of Fire Services stands out as the highest-rated division with a 95 percent rating. The second highest-rated area was the Division of Public Services' Public Library and Information Center with 93 percent.

**Figure 13-4: Comparison of Overall Score by Administrative Departments**



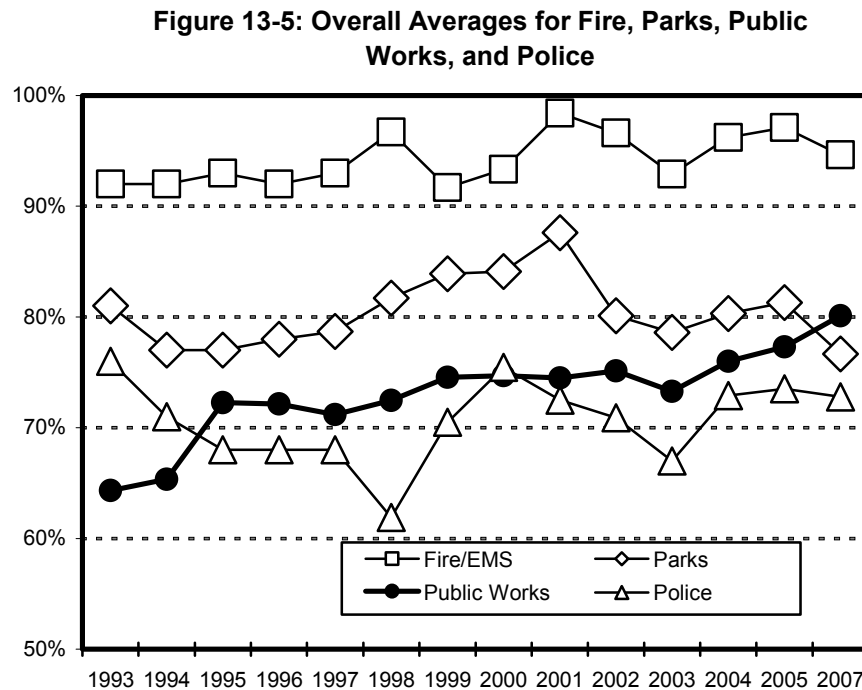
The second tier of above average City divisions included only the Division of Public Works with a rating of 80 percent.

The next tier had below average ratings. These included Division of Park Services (77 percent), Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW - 76 percent), Executive Division (76 percent), Health Department (74 percent), and the Division of Police Services (73 Percent).

Two divisions/areas had overall ratings that were ranked well below average with rating between 63 and 65 percent. These divisions were Housing and Community Development (HCD) at 64 percent and the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) at 63 percent.

## Trends

The Memphis Poll provides overall trend data for City divisions. Figure 13-5 shows the four divisions for which there was data for the entire fourteen years of the Memphis Poll.



The Division of Fire Services has the most impressive trend line. All of its overall measures during the fourteen years of the Memphis Poll exceeded 90 percent. This is a division that has an excellent long-term track record in the Memphis Poll.

Next, the Division of Public Works was above average. The trend shows a remarkable improvement from year to year of the Memphis Poll.

The Division of Park Services was rated just below average in 2007. There are some troubling aspects to the trend line. From 1994 to 2001, Division of Park Services made incremental improvements in its services that were recognized by the citizens. The increases in any one-year were small, but overall the trend line

showed a consistent improvement in services. There was a precipitous decline from 2001 to 2002. From 2002 to 2005 services stabilized around 80 percent. However in 2007, the division showed a slight downturn again in the ratings.

Finally, the Division of Police Services is also slightly below average. It has the most complex trend line of any division. The trend line for the police shows four distinct patterns in the fourteen years of the Memphis Poll. The first period from 1993 to 1998 showed a steep decline in police ratings. There were two years of improved ratings from 1998 to 2000. In fact, the improvement was very large and returned the division to the level it enjoyed in 1993. The third period from 2000 to 2003 showed an incremental decline in police ratings. The fourth period between 2003 and 2007 showed a distinct improvement and stabilization in the citizens' ratings of the police.

There were some additional trend charts for services with only three years of information available. These services are displayed in three separate charts since the trend lines would otherwise overlap each other and be difficult to read.

Figure 13-6 provides the trend line for the Health Department. It shows an incremental decline over the first four years in which the citizens were asked to rate their services, followed by a slight increase for 2007.

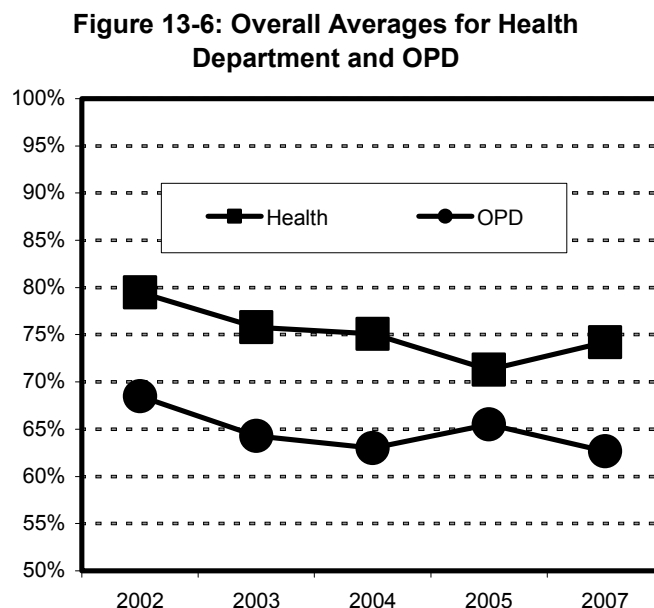
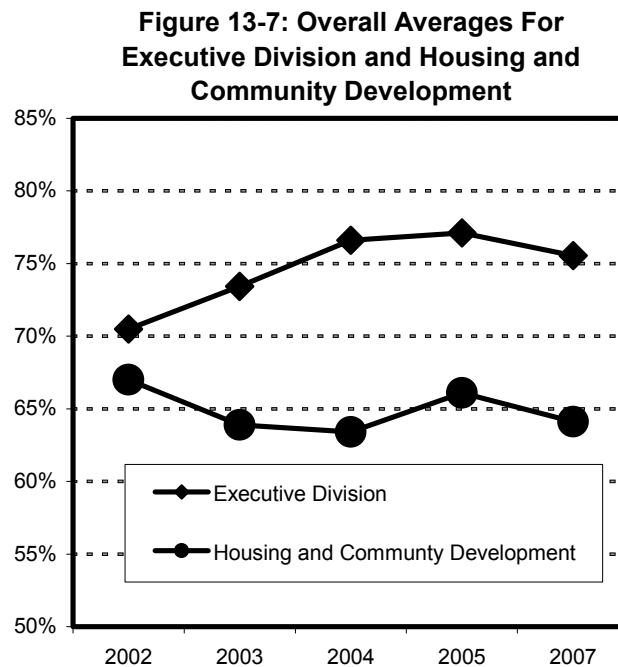


Figure 13-6 also shows that the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) ratings had about a five percent range and it does not appear that the services are improving.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 13-7 shows the trend line for the Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The line is flat showing consistency in ratings over time, albeit at a level far below the overall average for City services. Several new services were added to this division in 2005 but these did not appear to change the ratings.<sup>69</sup>



The Executive Division began to administer the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and the Center for Neighborhoods in 2007. However to provide context the rating are taken back to 2002 when these services were in the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods. The ratings for the Executive Division in Figure 13-7 show improvements from 2002 to 2005 with a small decline in 2007.

Figure 13-8 shows the trend line data for the Division of Public Services' Public Library and Information Center, and Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW). The Memphis Poll did not ask questions about these two agencies in 2004.

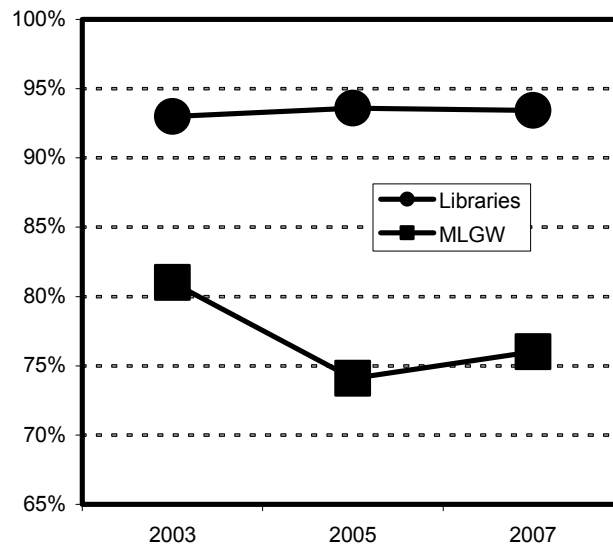
<sup>68</sup> The Memphis Poll would like to expand the questions asked about this agency. Subsequent Polls could ask citizens to rate the role of the agency in planning and zoning issues.

<sup>69</sup> This is only a tentative assessment because of the difficulty of rating all of its functions that included some of the contacting measures not used in this chapter—for example the performance of housing code enforcement.

The Public Library and Information Center enjoys consistently high citizens' ratings. It is among the "signature" services of the City of Memphis.

In contrast, MLGW experienced a significant decline in its ratings which were above average in 2003. This decline is directly related to the significant decline in the ratings for the cost of utilities provided by MLGW. Although it was rated slightly higher than in 2005, the ratings for MLGW remained below average in 2007.

**Figure 13-8: Overall Averages for Public Libraries and MLGW**





## **Key Findings**

- ❑ The overall ratings of City services were very positive.
- ❑ The Division of Fire services has an impressive, long-term track record in the Memphis Poll with the highest ratings over time. The Public Library and Information Center also have received very high ratings.
- ❑ According to the citizens, the least effective services in City government were the MLGW's cost of utilities and Division of Park Services' public swimming pools.
- ❑ The Division of Public Works showed impressive improvements in its rating over time.

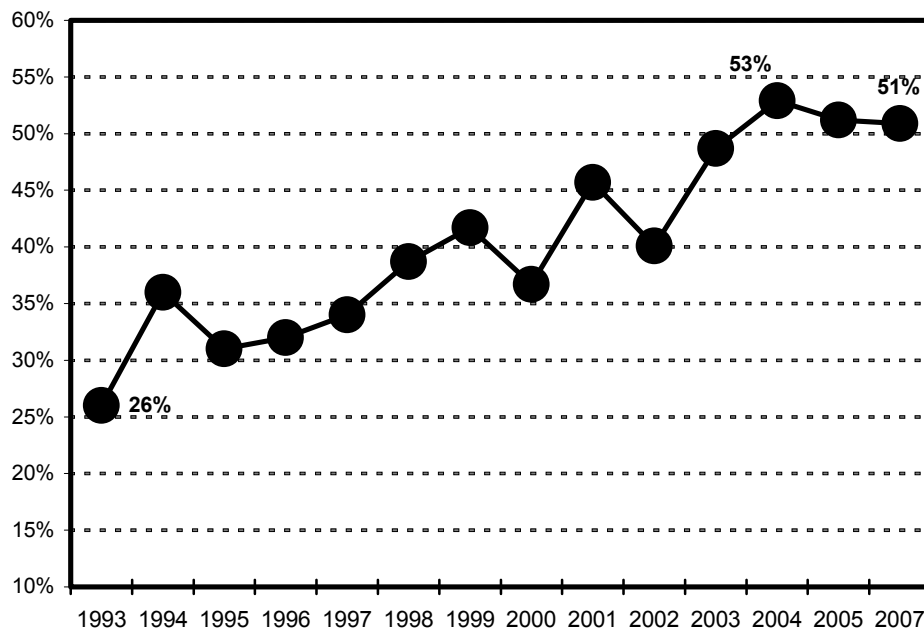
# Chapter 14

## Traffic Engineering and Enforcement

### Speeding on Neighborhood Streets

The Memphis Poll has examined citizens' concerns about speeding on streets in their neighborhoods since the first Poll in 1993. Speeding on neighborhood streets can produce dangerous conditions. The latest national data in 2003 on traffic related fatalities shows that the City of Memphis is rated number 20 out of 147 cities on the number of traffic fatalities. It had 90 total fatalities with 21 pedestrian fatalities in 2003.

**Figure 14-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Speeding on Neighborhood Streets as a Problem**



Speeding on neighborhood streets is a responsibility of the Division of City Engineering which can control speeding through street design and traffic calming devices.<sup>70</sup> The Police Department has a responsibility for reducing speeding through enforcement strategies.

<sup>70</sup> In 2002, speeding on neighborhood streets was in a separate chapter for the Division of Engineering. After that it was placed in the Division of Police Services' chapter. However, the importance of this topic was lost in that chapter and although both divisions have responsibility for this problem, it appears that traffic engineering issues are more important in addressing speeding in Memphis.

## Citizens' Concerns

Figure 14-1 shows increasing levels of concern about speeding on neighborhood streets from the first year of the Memphis Poll.<sup>71</sup> The figure shows that 26 percent of the citizens were concerned about speeding in 1993 and that percentage has consistently increased over the years of the Memphis Poll to 51 percent in 2007. However, the citizens' ratings have stabilized over the last three years of the Memphis Poll.

The Memphis Poll examined concerns about speeding on neighborhood streets by section of the City. Figure 14-2 shows that the Northeast had the highest levels of concern with 64 percent. In contrast, Fareast had the lowest level of concerns with 33 percent. The other sections ranged from 46 to 57 percent.

**Figure 14-2: Speeding By Section of City**

Areas	Percent Concerned
Northeast	64%
Downtown	57%
Southeast	57%
Northwest	54%
Southcentral	52%
Northside	51%
Midtown	49%
Southside	48%
Eastside	47%
Southwest	46%
Fareast	33%

However, there are limitations to these findings. Speeding deals with neighborhood streets and does not indicate citizens' concerns about speeding on major streets or expressways in the City. Although speeding was identified as the most widespread neighborhood concern, citizens did not rate the slowing of traffic speed on City streets as important as many other City priorities.<sup>72</sup>

The reader should consult the 2002 Memphis Poll which performed a broad analysis of speeding for the Department of Engineering. It found extensive speeding on an average day in the citizens' neighborhoods and identified the

<sup>71</sup> The response rate for this question on speeding was 99 percent.

<sup>72</sup> See the 2004 Memphis Poll for information on the lower priority that citizens attach to abating speeding on neighborhood streets.

sources of the speeding vehicles. The citizens did not support lowering speed limits.<sup>73</sup>

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Citizens were highly concerned about speeding on neighborhood streets.
- ❑ Earlier Memphis Polls provided more information on the citizens' perceptions of this issue.

---

<sup>73</sup> See the 2002 Memphis Poll for these results.

# Chapter 15

## Technical Issues

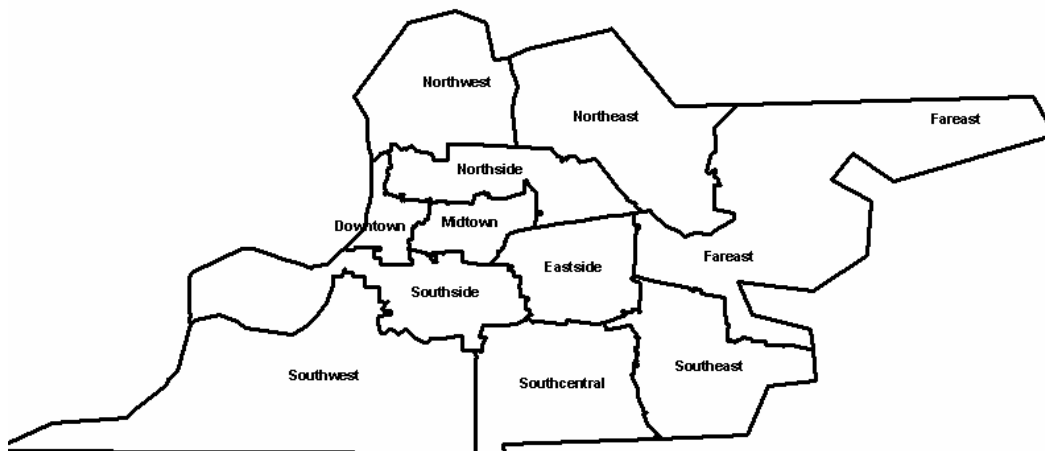
### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is available on the City of Memphis website:  
[www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov).

### The Polling Map

The Memphis Poll interviewed citizens from each section of the City in proportion to the population of the City. The information for each section of the City is displayed in maps in this report. This map displays the Fareast differently than the actual borders so that the data can be more easily understood. Figure 15-1 shows the base map that was generated from this effort.

**Figure 15-1**  
**Simplified Map**  
**Memphis Polling Areas**



The map is a simplification that allows the reader to visually understand how the information is being analyzed. The map includes eleven areas that represent different sections of the City. The names of the areas are geographical and do not necessarily reflect commonly used names. The areas are based on zip codes. It was important in creating these areas to include sections of both the older City and the newer annexed areas. Some conventions have been used in the naming

of the areas that emphasize the ability to display the area names in the maps. For example, “Fareast” is used to name the area that includes Cordova, Countrywood, and other sections that are at the periphery of the City.

The number of respondents from each area is displayed in Figure 15-2. The population ranged from the smallest areas, Northwest with 50 citizens, to the largest area, Southwest with 114 citizens. The differences in citizens by area were a function of the zip codes that were available and a desire to keep areas somewhat similar in characteristics. On the other hand, an attempt was also made to include as many citizens as possible from each area.

**Figure 15-2: Number of Respondents by Polling Area**

<b>Name of Area</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Northwest	50	5.5%
Fareast	51	5.6%
Downtown	62	6.8%
Southcentral	66	7.2%
Midtown	74	8.1%
Northeast	78	8.6%
Northside	96	10.5%
Southside	104	11.4%
Eastside	105	11.5%
Southeast	115	12.6%
Southwest	114	12.5%

The findings of the Memphis Poll examined by section of the City must be used carefully since each area has a smaller sample size than the information used for the City as a whole. There have been some requests to provide data for even smaller areas by zip codes. However, the Memphis Poll will not provide this data because of the instability of smaller sample sizes.

The total number of respondents in the 2007 Memphis Poll was 915 – the highest number in the history of the Poll.